

POCONO MOUNTAIN SD

PO Box 200

Comprehensive Plan | 2021 - 2024

Steering Committee

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LEA Profile

Pocono Mountain School District (PMSD) is a very diverse school district located in Northeastern Pennsylvania, within the heart of the Pocono resort and recreation area. The District spans 305 square miles within seven municipalities and one borough in Monroe County including the Borough of Mount Pocono, and the Townships of Barrett, Coolbaugh, Jackson, Paradise, Pocono, Tobyhanna and Tunkhannock. The District is located near Philadelphia and New York City, both of which are approximately 100 miles away.

Townships that comprise the EAST side of the district are Jackson, Pocono, Paradise, Barrett and Mount Pocono Borough. The WEST side of the district is made up of Tobyhanna, Tunkhannock and Coolbaugh Townships. Note: The small area east of Route 380 that is Coolbaugh Township is also part of the East side of the district.

In addition to the regional resort industry, private and public business entities that support the local economy include medical care centers (i.e. Pocono Medical Center); higher education institutions (i.e. East Stroudsburg University and Northampton Community College); retail sales centers (i.e. The Crossings shopping center); various warehouse distribution centers (i.e. Walmart, Johnson & Johnson, and the Fed Express distribution centers); the world's leading vaccine manufacturer, Sanofi Pasteur; government operated facilities (i.e. the Tobyhanna Army Depot); and the outdoor state and national recreational areas (i.e. Big Pocono State Park, Tobyhanna State Park, Gouldsboro State Park, Beltzville State Park, Hickory Run State Park and the Delaware Water Gap National Area).

The public community resources available to our District residents are typically county government based. The Monroe County services available to our children and their families include Monroe County Children & Youth, Monroe-Pike-Carbon Drug & Alcohol Commission, Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services, Monroe County Juvenile Probation, Monroe County United Way, Monroe County Salvation Army, Women's Resources of Monroe County, and Monroe County Big Brother / Big Sister.

The Pocono Mountain School District provides an exemplary educational program for the children of our District that includes instruction in all academic areas relevant to their preparation for the future. Pocono Mountain School District is a strong academic community where students build confidence to be college and career ready. All students and staff are active learners engaged in meaningful experiences that promote mutual respect, trust and character. To promote increased student achievement, Pocono Mountain has

developed a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum that is aligned to Pennsylvania State Standards in all core content areas. A rigorous and relevant curriculum is one that is cognitively demanding and challenging to students as they apply the essential concepts and skills to real world, complex and open-ended situations. The content is not just interesting to students, but involves particular intellectual challenges. An extensive variety of after school activities in the arts, academics and athletics are provided to enrich our students, as well.

PMSD provides Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) which meet the needs of all children. In addition to the regular instruction of the core curriculum, various other opportunities and supports are available to our children including: Special Education services, ESL services, 504 Plan accommodations, On-Line Cyber Learning, Monroe County Technical Institution vocational training, Credit Recovery for "At Risk" high school students, Student Assistance Programs and Instructional Support Programs. The District is committed to setting high standards for all students receiving Special Education services. Special Education supports and services in the District include a full continuum of services and are in compliance with federal and state laws. Every student in the District is provided an educational program that fosters independence and success to transition successfully to post-secondary education or the workforce. Students are provided access to the general education curriculum with specially designed instruction based on the student's individual strengths and needs. An alternative curriculum/program will be provided, if and when appropriate, based on the student's individual strengths and needs. Special education supports and services are provided to approximately 23 percent of the total school population of students.

A local county based committee (Monroe County Children's Roundtable) to address any and all concerns of our children in the four (4) existing public school systems of Monroe County has been assembled. Representatives of the school districts including the Pocono Mountain SD, East Stroudsburg ASD, Stroudsburg SD and Pleasant Valley SD meet with representatives of the various county agencies that impact school aged-children. Concerns relevant to the care and welfare of all children, grades K - 12, are identified, discussed and resolved to the greatest degree possible.

In addition to providing students with core content instruction and related services, the Pocono Mountain School District partners with various community organizations in order to provide for community-based activities, such as Youth Association of Pocono Mountain programs, the YMCA, as well as social work programs and services, such as Project One to Won and "School to Work."

SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT (2021-2022): Approximately 9,468 students K-12

West High School	1371
East High School	1,142
PM Cyber Program	809
West Junior High School	688
East Junior High School	572
Clear Run Elementary Center	651
Swiftwater Elementary Center	933
Tobyhanna Elementary Center	559
Clear Run Intermediate School	862
Swiftwater Intermediate School	727
Out of District Placement:	96
Cyber, Charter and Home Schooled:	877

Mission and Vision

Mission

The mission of the Pocono Mountain School District is to prepare all students for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

Vision

The vision of the Pocono Mountain School District is to create a culture of achievement, improve student performance, maintain safe schools, and promote strong character.

Educational Value Statements

Students

Students: We believe that... All students have value and share in the responsibility for their success in the educational process. All students possess unique strengths and needs. All students are to be respectful and respected. All students need the opportunity to learn in an educational program that maximizes their potential.

Staff

Teachers: We believe that... Teachers foster futuristic thinking and learning among all students. Teachers and parents are strategic partners in the success of the student. Teachers continue to grow in their professional development. Teachers recognize individual differences in each child and help each to meet his or her potential. Teachers are humanistic and flexible in their styles and approaches.

Administration

Administrators: We believe that... Administrators utilize community resources and input in the decision-making process. Administrators make decisions consistent with the mission statement of the district. Administrators take a visionary and proactive role in the operation of the district. Administrators are committed to personal and professional growth and development. Administrators plan and implement a safe and positive learning environment. Administrators encourage excellence and innovation as they assist teachers in implementing the district curriculum. Administrators focus on positive communication between families and schools. Administrators maintain a sound fiscal operation.

Parents

Parents and Guardians: We believe that... Parents and guardians provide continuous positive involvement in the educational process. Parents and guardians support educators in educational programs and district discipline to enable students to be in a safe environment conducive to learning. Parents and guardians communicate with students and educators.

Community

School Community: We believe that... The school community must be respectful and responsive to its diverse composition. The school community creates an environment that supports each student at his or her individual level. The school community is apprised of the inherent worth and financial value of a vibrant public school system.

Other (Optional)

School Board: We believe that... The School Board is accountable to the community for providing a public forum and considering community input in decision making to ensure solutions to educational issues. The School Board pursues all available avenues to encourage longevity among district personnel for the purpose of educational consistency. The School Board develops the educational process to its highest standards by providing the necessary resources needed to promote a fair and equitable learning environment. The School Board develops short and long range plans to provide financial security for the district's future growth and development. The School Board investigates all avenues of funding to increase revenue for public education.

Summary Of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Strength	Consideration In Plan
Grade 6 Math and Keystone Algebra I (all schools)- PVAAS showed significant evidence that the school exceeded the standard for academic growth (dark blue)	No
ELA grades 5 and 8 PVAAS showed significant evidence that all school exceeded the standard for academic growth (light and dark blue)	No
Effective Professional Development and Personalized Learning Opportunities	No
Formation of building data teams, data and results driven department and faculty meetings	Yes
Implementation of CDT's, benchmark assessments, common grade level assessments, formative assessments	Yes
Continuous Curriculum review and revisions, consistent implementation of positive school-wide behaviors programs, MTSS, and SEL	No
Data from assessments (common assessments, CDTs, Formative and Diagnostic) used to drive instruction Data review meetings	No
Observations and post conferences based on the Danielson Model	Yes

Data from assessments (common assessments, CDTs, Formative and Diagnostic) used to drive instruction Data review meetings	No
Consistent implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support program, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) , multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).	No
Elective and AP courses offered have increased opportunities for all students to explore courses related to college and career redadiness	No
Students from all subgroups have been strongly encouraged to enroll in higher level classes. Course requirements have been revised to all increased opportunities for interested students.	No
Increased communication with parents regarding the importance of regular attendance	No
Additional support for students with disabilities including academic small groups	No
All programs have active leadership and engage a variety of school stakeholders in the planning and implementation process	Yes
Relationships between staff and administration are positive with the common goal of supporting student learning while providing a positive learning environment	Yes
Ample resources are made available throughout the district to meet the needs of staff and students.	Yes
Professional development focused on specific math programs	No
Professional development specific to science concepts	No
EJHS grades 7 and 8 Black, Economically Disadvantaged, Lowest Performing 33%, GIEPs, Students with IEPs and White subgroups showed moderate to significant evidence that the school exceeded the standard for academic growth (light and dark blue)	No

Challenges

Challenge	Consideration In Plan
Grade 7 Mathematics- PVAAS continues to show significant evidence that the WJHS school did not meet the standard for PA academic growth (red)	No
Grade 4 ELA all schools - PVAAS continues to show significant evidence that the school did not meet the standard for PA academic growth (red)	No

WJHS grades 7 and 8: Black, Economically Disadvantaged, Lowest Performing 33%, GIEPs, students with IEPs and White subgroups-PVAAS shows moderate evidence that school did not meet the standard for PA academic growth (YELLOW)	No
Increased content knowledge and implementation of effective teaching strategies for struggling staff members	Yes
Additional student interventions to address academic and social emotional issues	No
More instructional time for math at the secondary level	No
Continuing professional development for teachers	Yes
Ability to hire additional secondary math certified teachers. Currently, the teacher shortage in the area of math greatly impacts the district's ability to hire additional math support staff or appropriate state certified substitutes to cover classes for Math teachers on leave.	No
Increase number of informal and formal observations to ensure standards aligned curriculum is being taught	Yes
Student scheduling needs to allow for more flexibility in individual schedules.	No
Increasing Professional development to support strategies specific to the needs of students with disabilities	Yes
Increasing student attendance by offering student incentives	No
Consistent daily attendance for students with disabilities is a significant concern that impact academic growth and achievement.	No
Secondary schools need to implement a consistent approach to MTSS.	No
Prioritizing district needs can be a challenge when faced with several areas requiring a good deal of effort and resources.	Yes
The recruitment and retention of fully credentialed, experienced and high-quality staff is an ongoing area of difficulty for district.	No
The ability to provide staff professional development during the school day has been severely limited due to lack of substitute teachers.	No
Offer additional professional development for science teachers	No

Most Notable Observations/Patterns

Analyzing Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Strength	Discussion Points
Formation of building data teams, data and results driven department and faculty meetings	Who serves on data teams, how to best share information with teachers, ensuring data is used to guide instruction
Implementation of CDT's, benchmark assessments, common grade level assessments, formative assessments	Is there evidence of data being used to drive instruction, do staff need additional training on understanding assessments
Observations and post conferences based on the Danielson Model	Who conducts observations, purpose of observation (drive program or evaluate teacher), data collection, review from observational data, format for observation
All programs have active leadership and engage a variety of school stakeholders in the planning and implementation process	Are program goals widely communicated, is there a way to reach additional stakeholders
Relationships between staff and administration are positive with the common goal of supporting student learning while providing a positive learning environment	What strategies are most effective in maintaining a positive learning environment
Ample resources are made available throughout the district to meet the needs of staff and students.	Are all teachers aware of available resources, are teachers engaged in piloting resources

Challenges

Challenge	Discussion Points	Priority For Planning	Priority Statement
Increased content knowledge and implementation of effective teaching strategies for struggling staff members	Teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so they can help students with content. Effective instruction strategies allow students to better comprehend content	No	

Continuing professional development for teachers	Time for PD, coverage during PD, prioritizing topics (including topics specific to meeting the needs of struggling staff members and students with disabilities) format of PD sessions, mandated vs. voluntary,	Yes	Professional development needs to be offered in variety of formats (face to face, virtually, evening or weekends) to better meet teachers' time availability. Topics should be specific to needs of teachers and content specific when appropriate. PD needs to be engaging to provide teachers with opportunities to get hands-on experience designing and practicing new teaching strategies.
Increase number of informal and formal observations to ensure standards aligned curriculum is being taught	Who conducts observations, purpose of observation (drive program or evaluate teacher), data collection, review from observational data, format for observation	Yes	Frequent observations provide more accurate data and give the most accurate understanding of how frequently specific teaching practices are used in the classroom. Administrators will conduct 5 minute informal classroom observations as a strategy to drive a cycle of continuous improvement by focusing on the effects of instruction and the effectiveness of professional development sessions.
Increasing Professional development to support strategies specific to the needs of students with disabilities	Time for PD, coverage during PD, prioritizing topics, format of PD sessions, mandated vs. voluntary	No	
Prioritizing district needs can be a challenge when faced with several areas requiring a good deal of effort and resources.	What criteria would be used to determine priorities? How to get stakeholder buy in once priorities are determined	Yes	Prioritizing tasks is the foundation of using time effectively and working more efficiently. Priorities can be determined by responses to the following guiding questions: Strategic Alignment: How will this initiative support a variety of strategic priorities? Student Impact: How might this initiative directly drive outcomes with our students? Return on Investment: How will this initiative provide benefits beyond those directly impacted? Flexibility: Are we able to adjust our course with new information?

Goal Setting

Priority: Professional development needs to be offered in variety of formats (face to face, virtually, evening or weekends) to better meet teachers' time availability. Topics should be specific to needs of teachers and content specific when appropriate. PD needs to be engaging to provide teachers with opportunities to get hands-on experience designing and practicing new teaching strategies.

Outcome Category	Measurable Goal Statement	Measurable Goal Nickname	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3
Professional learning	Professional development opportunities will be offered in the various formats to increase teacher participation in trainings. Topics will be based on results of teacher professional development needs survey and will be designed to actively engage teachers in the learning process.	Professional development for teaching staff	A Professional Development survey will be sent to all staff. The goal is to get 85% of staff members to complete and submit the survey. A minimum of one professional development workshop will be offered in a virtual online format. Teachers will be able to participate in this PD from on offsite location. A minimum of one weekend workshop will be offered to teachers in a face-to-face format. Professional Development workshops will be observed and evaluated for teacher engagement. Attendance will be recorded for to establish attendance data for both formats.	Virtual Online and weekend PD attendance from year one will be reviewed and used to implement additional opportunities in year 2 with a minimum of 2 or more formats (online, evening, weekend) being offered. The goal is teacher participation in training to increase in attendance by 20% from benchmark attendance data.	Professional development opportunities will be offered in the various formats to increase teacher participation in trainings. Topics will be based on results of teacher professional development needs survey and will be designed to actively engage teachers in the learning process.

Priority: Frequent observations provide more accurate data and give the most accurate understanding of how frequently specific teaching practices are used in the classroom. Administrators will conduct 5 minute informal classroom observations as a strategy to drive a cycle of continuous improvement by focusing on the effects of instruction and the effectiveness of professional development sessions.

Outcome Category	Measurable Goal Statement	Measurable Goal Nickname	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3
Essential Practices 1: Focus on Continuous Improvement of Instruction	Administrators will increase the number of informal 5-min observations completed during a school year from two per week in year 1 to four per week in year 3. Observations will have a stated focus area to observe. Data on the focus areas will be analyzed by school administrators to evaluate the professional development sessions and overall instructional programs/ practices.	5-minute Classroom Observations	School administrators will develop a schedule of monthly focus areas for 5-minute informal observations. A format of recording data during a 5 minute visit will be established specific to each school. Each building administrator will be responsible for conducting a minimum of two 5-minute observations per week. Data meetings will be held monthly to discuss observations and plan professional development or curriculum needs accordingly.	Administrators will develop a schedule of monthly focus areas for 5-minute informal observations. Format for recording data may be revised by the school. Each school administrator will be responsible for conducting a minimum of three 5-minute observations per week. Data meetings will be held monthly to discuss observations and plan professional development or curriculum needs accordingly.	Administrators will increase the number of informal 5-min observations completed during a school year from two per week in year 1 to four per week in year 3. Observations will have a stated focus area to observe. Data on the focus areas will be analyzed by school administrators to evaluate the professional development sessions and overall instructional programs/ practices.

Priority: Prioritizing tasks is the foundation of using time effectively and working more efficiently. Priorities can be determined by responses to the following guiding questions: Strategic Alignment: How will this initiative support a variety of strategic priorities? Student Impact: How might this initiative directly drive outcomes with our students? Return on Investment: How will this initiative provide benefits beyond those directly impacted? Flexibility: Are we able to adjust our course with new information?

Outcome Category	Measurable Goal Statement	Measurable Goal Nickname	Target Year 1	Target Year 2	Target Year 3
Essential Practices 2: Empower Leadership	Administrators, district curriculum directors and supervisors will review school and district programs/initiatives and establish a list of priorities that will help school leaders focus on what really matters for their staff and students. Tasks related to priorities should be evaluated and with associated responsibilities delegated to more effectively build leadership within the school.	Prioritizing initiatives and promoting school leadership	Administrative team will list all applicable initiatives and duties. Using the following questions a priority list will be established: How much of an impact on student learning and well-being will this priority have? Does this priority address our most pressing needs? Does this priority build on our existing initiatives, strengths, or school values? How much will this priority influence other aspects of the school? Once the team has determined the order of priorities a plan can be developed that addresses the priority while delegating tasks not identified as priority.	The administrative team will evaluate the progress of programs/initiatives identified as priority. Based on evidence of effectiveness, priorities can be adjusted as needed.	Administrators, district curriculum directors and supervisors will review school and district programs/initiatives and establish a list of priorities that will help school leaders focus on what really matters for their staff and students. Tasks related to priorities should be evaluated and with associated responsibilities delegated to more effectively build leadership within the school.
Essential Practices 5: Allocate Resources Strategically and Equitably	Administrators, district curriculum directors and supervisors will clearly identify all initiatives and programs to be implemented. Using criteria provided in target year 1, programs and initiatives will be prioritized with specific administrators assigned to specific priorities to balance leadership and resources among all school leaders.	Distributing leadership responsibilities and resources	Assignment of priorities to school leaders will be implemented.	Reporting of progress of priorities and programs will be presented by assigned school leaders.	Administrators, district curriculum directors and supervisors will clearly identify all initiatives and programs to be implemented. Using criteria provided in target year 1, programs and initiatives will be prioritized with specific administrators assigned to specific priorities to balance leadership and resources among all school leaders.

Action Plan

Action Plan for: Effective Teacher Professional Development						
Measurable Goals		Anticipated Output			Monitoring/Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development for teaching staff 5-minute Classroom Observations Prioritizing initiatives and promoting school leadership 		1. Attendance at trainings will reflect 50% of eligible teachers. 2. Classroom Observations will indicate effective implementation of Professional Development focus areas. 3. Student achievement and growth will be positively impacted by attendance in PD sessions.			Building administrators, directors, and supervisors will conduct informal observations, student data will be reviewed quarterly by data teams, attendance at PD sessions will be monitored in relationship to teachers invited vs. teachers attending	
Action Step	Anticipated Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Lead Person/Position	Material/Resources/Supports Needed	PD Step?	Com Step?
Conduct a district-wide needs assessment of instructional practices, and programs related to content specific background knowledge and awareness of resources	10/30/2021	06/30/2022	Dr. Kathleen Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources	Google Survey, Data Analysis; Content Curriculum Directors Work Group	Yes	Yes
Establishment of schedule for PD based on content and specific topics identified in needs assessment	01/15/2022	06/30/2024	Dr. Kathleen Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources	Directors of Content Areas, district administrators, iu 20 training staff	Yes	Yes
Implement the agreed upon schedule of professional development training	01/15/2022	06/30/2024	Dr. Kathleen Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources	Content specific training resources, presenters, platform for virtual trainings (Zoom)	Yes	Yes
Evaluate effectiveness of PD Sessions in terms of increased skill or knowledge and overall teacher participation in trainings	01/15/2022	06/30/2024	Dr. Kathleen Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources	Post training survey, classroom observations, discussion groups, attendance records	Yes	Yes

Professional Development Action Steps

Evidence-based Strategy	Action Steps
Effective Teacher Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a district-wide needs assessment of instructional practices, and programs related to content specific background knowledge and awareness of resources • Establishment of schedule for PD based on content and specific topics identified in needs assessment • Implement the agreed upon schedule of professional development training • Evaluate effectiveness of PD Sessions in terms of increased skill or knowledge and overall teacher participation in trainings

Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Assessment Needs Survey						
Action Step	Audience	Topics to be Included	Evidence of Learning	Lead Person/Position	Anticipated Timeline Start Date	Anticipated Timeline Completion Date
	All K-12 teachers and paraprofessionals, program specialists, curriculum directors, special education supervisors, and school administrators	Math K-2, Math 3-6, Math 7-12, ELA K-2, ELA 3-6, ELA 7-12, Science 3-6, Science 7-12, Social Studies 3-6, Social Studies 7-12, Mindfulness for educators and students, Trauma based responsiveness, Applying effective teaching strategies, Understanding Data, MTSS, Classroom Management	Observable actions in the classroom, increased student achievement and or growth, attendance in PD sessions	Dr. Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources	11/01/2021	11/15/2021
Learning Formats						
Type of Activities	Frequency	Danielson Framework Component Met in this Plan		This Step Meets the Requirements of State Required Trainings		
Action research	Teachers will be asked twice a year to self-evaluate their instructional strengths and weakness and complete a PD needs survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes • 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy 		Teaching Diverse Learners in an Inclusive Setting		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness • 4a: Reflecting on Teaching • 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning 	
Action research		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction • 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources • 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques • 3c: Engaging Students in Learning • 4c: Communicating with Families 	Language and Literacy Acquisition for All Students
Inservice day	2x per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students • 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources • 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport • 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning • 2d: Managing Student Behavior 	Trauma Informed Training (Act 18)

Communications Action Steps

Evidence-based Strategy	Action Steps
Effective Teacher Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a district-wide needs assessment of instructional practices, and programs related to content specific background knowledge and awareness of resources • Establishment of schedule for PD based on content and specific topics identified in needs assessment • Implement the agreed upon schedule of professional development training • Evaluate effectiveness of PD Sessions in terms of increased skill or knowledge and overall teacher participation in trainings

Communications Activities

Communicate and promote the sessions identified in the Professional Development Schedule					
Action Step	Audience	Topics to be Included	Type of Communication	Anticipated Timeline Start Date	Anticipated Timeline Completion Date
	Teachers, Paraprofessionals, and school Specialists	(Dependent upon results of needs survey) Math K-2, Math 3-6, Math 7-12, ELA K-2, ELA 3-6, ELA 7-12, Science 3-6, Science 7-12, Social Studies 3-6, Social Studies 7-12, Mindfulness for educators and students, Trauma based responsiveness, Applying effective teaching strategies, Understanding Data, MTSS, Classroom Management	Dr. Smith, Human Resources, Curriculum directors, school administrators, special education supervisors, Dr. Wade, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, Dr. Catherine Sweeney, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction	01/15/2022	06/30/2024
Communications					
Type of Communication			Frequency		
Email			monthly based on PD offerings		
Presentation			monthly in buildings		
Posting on district website			Quarterly		