



AAF

Frequently Asked Questions about the Academic Achievement Framework

THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FRAMEWORK (AAF) IN GENERAL

This document serves to answer questions commonly asked about the Academic Achievement Framework (AAF). For a more in-depth description of the Framework and a glossary of terms associated with the AAF, please consult The Academic Achievement Framework Implementation Guidebook, Version 2. To obtain a PDF or hard copy of the Guidebook, please contact Claudia Rinaldi, EDC Lead Consultant, at crinaldi@edc.org.

What is the AAF?

The AAF, articulated by BPS leadership in partnership with external consultants from Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), is a research-based multi-tier system of supports for academic skills, English language development, and social-emotional-behavioral proficiency. The Framework is being co-constructed with leaders and staff across the district to address the individual needs of **all** students using a multi-layered, data-driven problem solving process.

The AAF is a district-wide initiative. Superintendent Carol Johnson has described the Framework as a vehicle through which the district will reach the goals of the Acceleration Agenda, thereby making it an initiative that serves **all** BPS students. To date, AAF-related professional development opportunities have engaged more than 1,500 professionals across the district including school administrators, general and special education teachers, specialists, school psychologists, paraprofessionals, and central office personnel. Additionally, various BPS departments - Literacy, Mathematics, the Office of Special Education and Student Services, the Office of English Language Learners, and the Office of Family and Student Engagement – have been engaged in the co-construction and implementation of the Framework, as well as the development of the AAF Guidebook.

How does the Framework address the academic, social-emotional-behavioral, and English language development domains?

The AAF is a multi-tier system of supports based on the braiding of two nationally recognized research-based models: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). These models embody significant research on the effectiveness in addressing the needs of all students with a particular focus on differentiated instruction and preventive multi-tier interventions to address the needs of struggling students. RtI and PBIS involve targeting specific areas in which students are struggling and applying increasingly intensive research-based interventions while also closely monitoring progress until the barriers to learning are addressed. Braided, these models directly address the academic and socio-emotional-

behavioral development of students across early elementary through high school, and have been identified around the nation as a Multi-tier System of Support (MTSS). The AAF individualizes the MTSS theoretical framework to meet the unique needs of BPS. Central among these unique needs is the significant population of English language learners (ELLs) in the district who require culturally- and linguistically-responsive instruction not only in their development of academic skills and social-emotional-behavioral proficiencies but also in their acquisition of oral language development in English, the general education medium of instruction. To meet the needs of ELLs, the district has incorporated English Language Development (ELD) as a critical and integral component of the AAF.

SCHOOL SELECTION

How many schools are implementing the AAF?

Implementation began with an initial cohort of 30 schools in the fall of 2010 and, since then, has grown to add a second cohort of 31 schools in the winter of 2011 and a third cohort of 19 schools in the winter of 2012. A total of 80 of the district's 130 schools are implementing the Framework at various stages, representing 62% of the schools in the district. Of these 80 schools, 46 are 54 of the district's elementary schools, 26 of the 45 Middle/K-8 schools, and 16 of the 30 high schools.

How are schools selected to be in an AAF Cohort?

Most schools in Cohorts 1, 2, and 3 were self-identified. Schools that sent teachers to the AAF summer professional development institutes were also invited to consider joining a cohort. If principals or headmasters are interested in joining future cohorts, they should contact John Verre, Implementation Coordinator of the AAF and Assistant Superintendent of OSESS at jverre@boston.k12.ma.us or Claudia Rinaldi, EDC Lead Consultant, at crinaldi@edc.org.

SCHEDULING

When do Service Teams meet?

School leaders designate time for weekly or twice monthly Service Team meetings during which time members of the teams use the data-driven problem solving process to address instruction at Tiers 1, 2, and 3. In some schools, principals have designated the common planning time, or a portion part of it, for Service Team meetings. In others, principals have identified other times, including before and after school, for Service Teams to meet. For more information about Service Teams, including their composition, please refer to Part 2: Guidelines for Implementation, as well as Addendum 1, of the AAF Implementation Guidebook.

When do School Management Groups meet?

School leaders identify a time for the School Management Group to meet once per month to discuss school-wide data trends and problem solve around barriers that impede the work of Service Teams. Some schools have opted to use pre-existing team structures for School Management Group meetings. In some instances, schools use their Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) or Student Support Teams (SSTs) for school-wide data-driven problem solving. If schools choose to use ILTs or SSTs to function as their School Management Groups, it is essential that Service Team facilitators attend these meetings. For more information about School Management Groups, including their composition, please refer to Part 2: Guidelines for Implementation, as well as Addendum 1, of the AAF Implementation Guidebook.

Must schools sacrifice common planning time for Service Team meetings?

Schools do not have to give up common planning time for Service Team meetings. Schools can structure common planning time so that teachers use a portion of the time for data-driven problem solving that addresses instructional planning at Tiers 1 (i.e. core instruction), 2, and 3.

When do interventions occur?

This varies by school. Some schools have restructured their schedules to carve out "intervention blocks" in the school day during which staff can deliver intervention and enrichment instruction. Other schools have found time at the beginning or end of the day. Some schools consider small pockets of waiting or transitional time where there may be minutes that can be used for additional instruction for some students. Identifying time for intervention should be a thoughtful and deliberate process so that students not miss core instruction, specialty classes, or recess for extensive amounts of time. The research recommendation on the time for interventions is 20 minutes three times per week. Schools can evaluate what works for them and use progress monitoring every four to six weeks to assess student progress and fidelity of implementation before they add, change, increase, or decrease any aspect of an intervention. For more information about Tier 1, 2 and 3 interventions, please refer to the Glossary of Terms in the AAF Implementation Guidebook.

ACCESSING SUPPORT**What is the role of the Cross-Functional Rapid Support Team (C-FRST), and what is its impact on schools implementing the AAF?**

The role of the C-FRST is to utilize the data-driven problem solving process to address school-level barriers that cannot be solved by School Management Groups. It is comprised of the Chief Academic Officer or designee, Assistant Superintendents or their designees, district-level directors, principals of participating schools, directors of collaborating agencies, family representatives, and, during the development phase, an external consultant. For more information about C-FRSTs, including their composition, please refer to Part 2: Guidelines for Implementation, as well as Addendum 1, of the AAF Implementation Guidebook.

How do principals bring barriers to the C-FRSTs for data-driven problem solving?

Because this is a developing, co-constructed Framework, this is an area that is evolving across each of the C-FRSTs (i.e., elementary, middle/K-8, high school, and Turnaround School). The District Design Team will establish and communicate a district-wide universal process by which principals bring barriers to C-FRSTs for data-driven problem solving. Currently, principals contact their Academic Superintendent and request to be included on the meeting agenda for

their respective C-FRST. The principal or the school's AAF designee is then expected to attend the meeting and present the barrier their school is confronting, along with supporting data and information as to how the school's SMG has attempted to address the barrier and what additional support(s) are needed to remove it.

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

How does a school measure its level of AAF implementation?

Schools that are implementing the AAF at high levels have structures in place to support, sustain, and institutionalize practices that lead to a shift in how they educate students. Such a school exhibits the following characteristics:

1. The principal is invested in and committed to supporting staff in implementing the Framework.
2. The school has adopted and introduced the Framework through a school-wide AAF orientation.
3. A School Management Group has been established.
4. The School Management Group meets monthly.
5. Service Teams have been established throughout the entire school.
6. Service Teams meet weekly or twice monthly.
7. The school is collecting universal screening data at least three times during the school year.
8. The school is using the data collected to conduct data-driven problem solving and to monitor progress while also identifying school wide goals for growth.
9. Service Teams keep track of students' Records of Problem Solving and Progress Monitoring Worksheets. (See addendum 4 of the AAF Guidebook.)
10. The school is engaged in on-going cycles of progress monitoring.
11. Service Teams identify barriers that hinder implementation and bring them to the School Management Group for data-driven problem solving at the school level.
12. The school utilizes consultation from External and/or Internal Consultants to support the fidelity of implementation.
13. The School Management Group presents school-wide barriers to the C-FRST for data-driven problem solving as needed.
14. The school completes the Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation (SAPSI) at least twice a year.

High Implementation: 10 or more characteristics are observable

Moderate Implementation: between 5 and 10 characteristics are observable

Low Implementation: between 1 and 4 characteristics are observable