



## Pittsfield District Level System Change Glossary

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1. **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills:** student capabilities that include a strong emphasis on the development of self-directed and collaborative learners, engaged and responsible citizens, and effective problem solvers and communicators.
2. **Academic Support Programs:** interventions and supports, such as, afterschool homework labs, increased learning time, and opportunities for revision, all of which create conditions that do not allow students to fail.
3. **Active Learning:** a method of learning that includes discussion based classrooms, project based assignments, original research and experiment design, and student choice embedded in course work.
4. **Advisory:** time during the school day for students and faculty to connect through shared experiences for personal, social, and academic growth as well as college and career readiness. The following are activities associated with Advisory: Personal Learning Plans, Student Led Conferences, Portfolios, & Collaborative Grouping.
5. **Alternative Learning Plan:** a specific plan for graduation that is different from the established number of credits obtained in the classroom.
6. **Authentic Assessment:** means by which students demonstrate understanding and competencies, i.e., relevant knowledge and skills, other than by pencil and paper assessments. Students are able to choose and participate in performance exhibitions that provide multiple ways to demonstrate their learning. These assessments are scored based on a common rubric with opportunities to revise and show growth towards the mastery of course competencies. Authentic Assessment is sometimes referred to as Performance Assessment.
7. **Best Practices:** research based instruction that is powerful, engaging, and reaches the greatest depth, speed, and ability to apply. These practices are research based proven methodologies for strengthening instruction and leadership.
8. **Co-Curricular Activities:** activities in the areas of student interests
9. **Collaborative Grouping:** an instructional practice in which students work together to increase the success of the group by achieving shared goals, while learning and building consensus. Students collaborate while learning leadership and communication skills.

10. **Common Planning Time:** regularly scheduled time for teachers to meet and collaborate in teams. This time is used for the planning of curriculum and interdisciplinary units, looking at student work, organizing support for students, providing collegial support, and sharing best practices

11. **Common Rubrics and Assessments:** evaluation standards created collaboratively by the entire faculty to provide coherence and compatibility across the grade levels and course curricula for assessing student performance. The faculty continually validates their relevance, suitability, and consistent application.

12. **Community-Based Learning:** competency based learning that enhances the curriculum by using community mentors and places as resources for learning

13. **Community Advisory Council:** the group of faculty, community members, students, parents, and local politicians that work together to shape and communicate the student-centered learning redesign that will lead to maximized student success.

14. **Competencies:** an integrated set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enables students to effectively demonstrate and perform their understanding of the activities of instructional standards.

15. **Differentiated Instruction:** a best practice in which all students are treated individually and provided with intervention strategies to maximize their learning and personal growth—failure is not an option.

16. **Dual Credit Opportunities:** credit earning programs at the high school level that allow students to earn post-secondary credits. Students complete high school requirements and earn credit for college or vocational school work at the same time. These include articulation agreements with Career and Vocational Centers and advanced programming such as Advanced Placement courses

17. **Early Warning Systems:** authentic assessments and data that identify struggling students for the purpose of providing interventions as soon as possible.

18. **Equal Access to Technology:** a digital learning environment for students, parents, and community members that is open and user friendly.

19. **Extended Learning Opportunities:** a non-traditional learning experience for all students that provides opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills through hands on learning outside the classroom based on the students' passion, interest, and talent. Students earn credit by demonstrating mastery of the Extended Learning Opportunity competencies.

20. **Flexible Scheduling:** scheduling that allows students to pursue learning opportunities in different time frames that are not constrained by a bell schedule. The school experience is not confined to a set number of hours/day, days/week, months/year. Learning occurs during different times throughout the day and year to match the learning needs of students.

21. **Graduation Based on Mastery:** an expectation that students earn a diploma by demonstrating mastery of course competencies that are aligned with the standards.

22. **Heterogeneous Grouping-** an instructional practice in which every student has access to academically rigorous, college-preparatory courses.

23. **Literacy Across the Curriculum:** literacy curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned across grade levels and content areas. Students are engaged in literacy skills across the content areas.

24. **Multiple Pathways:** the different ways for students to demonstrate mastery of course competencies: classroom, non-traditional, and co-curricular experiences that accommodate the different learning styles of the students and afford them different opportunities for meeting graduation requirements.

25. **Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS):** Historically, Response to Intervention (RTI) has addressed academics and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has addressed behavior. Integrating both models directly addresses the academic, social, emotional and behavioral development of children from early childhood through adolescence and involves targeting specific areas in which students are struggling and then applying increasingly research-based interventions until the barriers to learning are addressed.

26. **Peer Supported Professional Development:** professional development in which teachers work in teams and learn through mentoring, collaborating, and sharing best practices.

27. **Performance Assessment:** means by which students demonstrate understanding and competencies, i.e., relevant knowledge and skills, other than by pencil and paper assessments. Students are able to choose and participate in performance exhibitions that provide multiple ways to demonstrate their learning. These assessments are scored based on a common rubric with opportunities to revise and show growth towards the mastery of course competencies. Performance assessment is sometimes referred to as Authentic Assessment.

28. **Personal Learning Plans (PLP):** a learning plan developed by each student with adult support to guide his/her personal, social, and academic growth and school experience. Based on personal interests and strengths, the Personal Learning Plan becomes the student's roadmap to chart progress and to identify challenges for future short and long term goals and aspirations.

29. **Portfolios:** a collection of student work, reflections, and assorted evidence that represent mastery of course competencies. It becomes a personalized method of archiving a student's educational experience and documents growth over time. It can be used as a communication tool regarding learning.

30. **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** improving student academic and behavior outcomes by ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible by providing a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

31. **Response to Intervention (RTI):** the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying student response data to important educational decisions

32. **School Visits** – an opportunity for students, teachers and community members to participate in visits to regional schools to observe and discuss best practices.

33. **Site Council:** a decision making body composed of students, educators, parents, and community members that review, modify, and make decisions regarding procedures, practices, policies, and structures of the school, with the students having the majority voice in order to have a positive impact on the educational process and school climate.

34. **Student Exhibitions:** public presentations of student work, usually with an accompanying piece of written work, explanation /defense by a student of his or her work.

35. **Student-Centered Learning:** an approach to education which puts students first and empowers them to take ownership of their learning. By creating rigorous individual goals and engaging in diverse relevant learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom, students develop and demonstrate mastery of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

36. **Student Led Conferences:** a conference in which the student and his or her advisor plans a presentation that articulates the students' academic, personal and social growth as outlined in their Personal Learning Plan, which is contained in their portfolio. During the presentation the students are in the lead role regarding this conversation about their learning.

37. **Student Voice and Choice:** opportunities provided to students to make decisions about teaching methods, course work, and evaluation techniques to demonstrate the mastery of course competencies. A variety of programs, organizations and structures in the school share the vision that student participation, leadership and citizenship are essential to school success.

38. **Teacher Evaluation System:** an evaluation system for teachers that is designed to promote professional growth and student learning.

39. **Teachers as Facilitators:** a model in which teachers are facilitators of student learning as opposed to deliverers of content. In this model of teachers as facilitators, the

students take active ownership for their learning while the teachers provide coaching and support.

40. **Whole Child Focus:** the school looks at the personal, social, and academic growth of each student.