Alexander Public School District



Strategic Improvement Plan (2026–2031)

Alexander, North Dakota

Purpose

This five-year Strategic Improvement Plan provides a clear, measurable roadmap for continuous improvement at Alexander Public School, a small rural K–12 school district in Alexander, North Dakota. The plan is grounded in findings from the Cognia Accreditation Review and aligned with John Hattie's *Visible Learning* research, particularly the concept of Academic Press.

This plan is intentionally designed for a small-school context with limited staffing and resources. It focuses on a few high-impact practices implemented well, rather than many initiatives implemented inconsistently. All strategies include specific measures, timelines, and evidence sources so improvement can be clearly demonstrated to the School Board, community, and accrediting agencies.

Research Foundation: Visible Learning & Academic Press

John Hattie's *Visible Learning* research synthesizes thousands of studies identifying practices with the greatest impact on student achievement. Central to this research is Academic Press, which includes:

- Clear learning intentions and success criteria
- High expectations for all students
- Ongoing monitoring of progress
- Student ownership of learning

Academic Press is not a program; it is a cultural and instructional mindset. When implemented consistently, it accelerates learning and supports equity across classrooms.

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthen Two-Way Communication & Stakeholder Trust

Cognia Alignment: Standards 3, 9

Goal

By 2027, Alexander Public School will have a consistent, transparent, two-way communication system where staff, families, and students understand how feedback and data are used to guide decisions.

Key Actions (Alexander-Specific)

- Develop a one-page communication flowchart showing how communication moves between parents, teachers, administration, and the school board (who communicates what, when, and how)
- Define clear follow-up expectations (who follows up, within what timeframe, and how resolution is documented)
- Send consistent information home with students (flyers, updates, events)
- Standardize platforms:
    - Website updates (weekly)
    - School app or messaging system
    - Social media and text messaging for reminders
- Assign a designated communication lead to ensure consistency
- Include public comment clarity at board meetings (who is aware, how feedback is captured and followed up)
- Publish bi-annual updates (November and May) on what the school is doing to improve (programs, test scores, student opportunities)

Measures of Success

- Staff survey item: *“I understand how feedback is used to make decisions”* increases by 25% by 2030
- Parent awareness survey: 80%+ of families report knowing how to receive school updates
- Communication flowchart created and used by 100% of staff and governing board

Evidence Collected

- Communication flowchart document
- Website/social media analytics
- Survey results
- Board meeting minutes

Strategic Priority 2: Increase Student Engagement & Student Voice

Cognia Alignment: Standards 4, 19, 20, 28

Goal

By 2030, students at Alexander Public School—particularly in grades 6–12—will demonstrate increased engagement, ownership of learning, and ability to articulate learning goals and progress.

Key Actions (Alexander-Specific)

- Ensure hands-on learning opportunities are embedded across subjects
- Increase student choice in assignments and projects
- Expand opportunities for:
    - Clubs and activities (actively educate students on availability)
    - Competitions and project-based learning
    - Flexible grouping and classroom participation
- Increase elective options for grades 9–12 where feasible
- Promote dual credit and CTE opportunities to students and families
- Implement student goal-setting and self-assessment routines tied to learning intentions
- Use platforms (Dojo, Thrillshare, Facebook) to highlight student success and leadership expectations
- Implement class competitions and recognition systems to build motivation
- Address student motivation directly through staff PD: *"Why should I care?"* lens
- Increase parent communication and engagement to reduce chronic absenteeism

Measures of Success

- Secondary student engagement survey results increase by **20%** by 2030
- 90% of students in grades 6–12 can articulate learning goals and next steps
- Increased participation in extracurriculars and activities by **15%**
- Reduction in disengagement indicators (behavior referrals, absenteeism) by **10–15%**
- Reduce chronic absenteeism by 5% by 2028

Evidence Collected

- Student surveys
- Participation data (activities, dual credit, electives)
- Walkthrough data
- Student goal-setting artifacts

Strategic Priority 3: Ensure Consistent Instructional Pacing & Curriculum Alignment

Cognia Alignment: Standards 7, 12, 21, 22

Goal

By 2030, Alexander Public School will ensure all students receive equitable access to standards-aligned instruction through consistent pacing and instructional clarity across classrooms.

Key Actions (Alexander-Specific)

- Clearly define district expectations for pacing guide implementation
- Utilize existing standard mapping (e.g., ELA) and align across grade levels
- Implement quarterly pacing fidelity checks:
    - Tier 1: Whole-group instruction alignment
    - Tier 2: Intervention aligned to specific standards/lesson plans
- Establish a 5-year curriculum cycle, prioritizing Reading and Math
- Review data annually to determine:
    - What is working
    - Where adjustments are needed
- Embed formative and summative assessments into pacing guides
- Use PLCs and walkthroughs to monitor instructional clarity and Academic Press

Measures of Success

- 90% or greater pacing fidelity documented by walkthrough data by 2029
- Year-over-year growth on STAR Reading and Math for 70%+ of students
- Clear alignment between instruction, assessment, and standards across classrooms

Evidence Collected

- Walkthrough tools
- STAR data
- PLC documentation
- Curriculum review notes

Strategic Priority 4: Formalize, Document, and Evaluate District Systems

Cognia Alignment: Standards 23, 24, 26, 27, 29

Goal

By 2031, Alexander Public School will operate from clearly documented, evaluated systems that ensure consistency, sustainability, and effective use of time and resources.

Key Actions (Alexander-Specific)

- Continue usage and additions to Alexander Public School Google Drive Hub with all core processes
- Identify 4–5 core systems:
    - Instruction (pacing + clarity)
    - MTSS (include reading specialist and Interventionist roles)
    - Behavior
    - Communication
    - Professional Development
- Develop clear, concise playbooks for each system (1–2 pages)
    - New Staff Structure (Interventionist, Strategist, Specialist roles) should allow time for people to complete these
- Assign accountability roles for each system (who owns it, who monitors it)
- Implement annual system reviews using data and staff feedback
- Align professional development days to:
    - Instructional clarity
    - Student engagement strategies
    - MTSS implementation
- Explore opportunities for:
    - Expanded electives (HS + elementary exposure)
    - Volunteer and community-based opportunities
- Create a budget that is fiscally responsible to take Alexander successfully into the future
    - Prioritization of needs to make the school more efficient

    - Make decisions on taxation and future school revenue based on Strategic Plan Priorities

Measures of Success

- 100% of core systems documented and accessible in APS Binder/Drive
- Staff survey: *"I understand district systems and expectations"* increases by **25%**
- Annual documentation of system effectiveness and adjustments to budget

Evidence Collected

- APS Binder / Google Drive
- System playbooks
- PD agendas and attendance
- Evaluation summaries

Five-Year Implementation Timeline (Measurable)

Year 1 (2025–26): Clarity & Baseline

- Adopt communication framework
- Define Academic Press expectations
- Establish baseline data (surveys, STAR, walkthroughs)

Year 2 (2026–27): Consistency

- Embed learning intentions and success criteria district-wide
- Begin pacing fidelity monitoring
- Expand student goal-setting routines
- Student-led conferences implemented district-wide

Year 3 (2027–28): Ownership

- Instructional adjustments based on data
- Evaluate and refine systems

Year 4 (2028–29): Refinement

- Focus on sustainability
- Address gaps identified in data

- Prepare for accreditation evidence collection

Year 5 (2029–30): Sustainability

- Academic Press embedded as district culture
- Systems self-monitor effectiveness
- Strategic goals met or exceeded

Governance & Monitoring

- Bi-Annual Board review of progress (May/June Board Meetings)
- Public reporting of key indicators
- Alignment with Cognia continuous improvement processes

Conclusion

This Strategic Improvement Plan positions Alexander Public School to move from good practice to great impact. By aligning systems, instruction, and culture around clarity, evidence, and high expectations, the district ensures sustained improvement for all students.