

Access to Resources

The Resource Allocation Review (RAR) includes a district self-assessment. One area on the self-assessment requires a district to describe and provide evidence of the process(es) for the allocation of resources to its schools (time, human and fiscal) to improve student achievement. This section delves into rigorous curriculum aligned to standards, experienced and effective teaching staff, instructional support, technology access and usage and how barriers are being reduced to ensure all students have opportunities to access rigorous, grade-level, advanced and accelerated coursework.

The examples below were provided as evidence from districts for the access to resources process during previous review cycles.

Advanced and Accelerated Learning Plan: A clearly articulated Advanced and Accelerated Learning Plan for students from elementary to grade 12 is made available and easily found on district and school websites.

Research tells us that students in accelerated and advanced courses are more engaged in school and have fewer absences and suspensions (Hengtgen & Biaggi, 2023). Students as young as 4th grade can benefit from accelerated learning as it allows students to progress through material at a faster pace and provides more depth or challenge to the grade-level content.

Students can also earn college credits and credentials toward their future college and career goals. This district example illustrates how utilizing time and human resources in a different way can meet the needs of advanced students.

Virtual Options: Middle and high-school aged students are provided with the opportunity for a virtual school option to ensure they remain enrolled in a public-school setting. Spots are limited in number, and all applications are reviewed thoroughly before admission to ensure students meet certain qualifications. The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) of any student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must document the student's enrollment in the virtual school in the ARC conference summary. Upon acceptance, the student and parent sign a contract. If students do not meet the requirements, they are dismissed from the virtual option and return to traditional in-person learning.

Through the strategic use of fiscal funds and implementation of an innovative approach to provide flexible alternatives, students can continue their education through the virtual option when it is preferred over the traditional setting.

Mental Health Snapshots: The practice of creating and reviewing Mental Health Snapshots provide data for encounters, hospitalizations, referrals and risk assessments that lead to informed decision-making around student mental health needs. The snapshots include community partnership and school-based services data along with focus topics for students throughout the school year.

Snapshots can provide a district with an accurate look at trends with student visits to the nurse. Broken down into primary workload such as physical illness, trauma, emotional and environmental injuries (stings, allergic reactions, etc.), this data informs decision making around student needs. Also, the data informs the use of fiscal resources in staffing schools that have higher student health needs.

Learning from These Examples

- A clear plan for advanced coursework and accelerated learning in a single document is easy for all students and families to read and understand.
- Options for keeping all students enrolled are varied and afford opportunities for students to continue their education in non-traditional ways with support.
- Having a clear understanding of mental health data in an easy-to-read format is helpful in making necessary adjustments to resources in meeting individual school needs.