

In 2013, Chehalis School District set forth a vision to improve student achievement, modernize instructional practice, and prepare students for college and careers. This vision has been embraced by the school board and by community partners, such as the Chehalis Foundation. For guidance and support in meeting these goals, Chehalis School District partnered with The BERC Group, an educational evaluation, research, and consulting firm focused on putting research into practice. This three-year partnership is designed to strengthen instructional practices in Chehalis classrooms, to focus on college and career readiness, and to instill a culture of data use throughout the district.

One of Chehalis School District's three overarching goals is to improve student achievement by increasing the quality of instructional practice, classroom organization, professional development, and teacher efficacy. To support this goal, The BERC Group has trained district leaders and teachers in Powerful Teaching and Learning, instructional practices aligned with cognitive research. Rather than simply teaching instructional strategies, The BERC Group emphasizes building effective instructional habits through peer observation, discussion, and reflection. In particular, The BERC Group focuses on Four Instructional Habits aligned to three specific nation-wide initiatives: the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), and the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP).

The district formed instructional leadership teams in each of the schools to guide the development of these habits. After receiving training in Powerful Teaching and Learning and the Four Instructional Habits, in Year 1, district administrators conducted three rounds of Calibration Walks to ensure they were scoring classroom observations consistently. At the same time, teachers conducted Reflection Walks to search for elements of Powerful Teaching and Learning in their colleague's classrooms and to plan ways to incorporate those elements into their own practices. This training has continued into Year 2, with administrators and teachers on the Instructional Leadership Teams participating in four additional rounds of training. Classroom observation data shows this training is beginning to have an impact on classroom practices. From Year 1 to Year 2, researchers noted a 20 percentage-point improvement in the percentage of lessons showing clear evidence of Powerful Teaching and Learning.

A College and Career Readiness committee formed in 2013. The committee has met nine times with The BERC Group to develop a comprehensive College and Career Readiness District Strategic Plan and aligned school plans. Establishing a college-aware culture is one of the keys to creating graduates who are informed, eligible, and prepared for post-secondary education. There is clear evidence of this work throughout the district. Chehalis teachers have displayed their diplomas in their classrooms, and wear college apparel to school on designated days. Even kindergarten teachers have reported using wording like "when you go to college," to promote college awareness, and educating parents about scholarship options. One of the district's benchmarks for success was to increase the number of students receiving the College Bound scholarship. By June of 2014, 100% of eligible eighth graders had already applied for the College Bound scholarship, compared to only 66% of eligible eighth graders in 2013, and 44% of eighth graders in 2008. The BERC Group is also analyzing student transcripts to keep the district informed about course taking patterns and college eligibility. The district has set a goal to increase college eligibility rates from 36% in 2014 to 60% in 2019 and 80% in 2024. In addition to determining rates of college eligibility for recent graduates, The BERC Group is tracking student data to determine

how many Chehalis students attend and graduate from college. The district's goal is to increase college graduation rates from 20% to 60% by 2024.

The BERC Group has also worked with the district to create a culture of data use. A district data team convened and developed a data use framework. The team worked with The BERC Group to identify metrics for custom data dashboards at the district and school levels. School Data Solutions, the developers of the popular Homeroom program, then helped to create the data dashboards, or key performance indicators (KPIs). This makes it easier for district personnel to review student achievement and college readiness and completion data. The BERC Group has since met with teams at each school to discuss the culture of data use, to examine each school's KPI, and to plan next steps.