
Baltimore Education Research Consortium

Strategic Plan

2009-2014

Executive Summary

July 31, 2009

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Executive Summary

In January 2009, the Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC) launched a 7-month strategic planning process to update the organization's vision and mission, set long-term organizational goals with aligned objectives and strategies, identify short-term high-impact actions to set the organization on a path towards meeting its goals, and identify and outline strategies aligned to the organization's highest priority needs related to capacity building, organizational sustainability, and execution of its research and dissemination plans.

BERC's revised mission and vision resulting from the strategic planning process include:

Mission: BERC's mission is to conduct and disseminate long- and short-term strategic data analysis and research that informs decisions about policy and practice to improve the educational and life outcomes of children in Baltimore. BERC assembles a diverse coalition of partners to formulate questions worth asking, contribute to conversations worth having, and highlight policy implications worthy of action.

Vision: Through conducting high-quality and policy-relevant research and analysis, the Baltimore Education Research Consortium brings the efforts and expertise of a broad consortium of partners to bear on questions of critical importance to the welfare of Baltimore's children. While working collaboratively with the Baltimore City Public Schools and other city or state agencies, BERC maintains an independent voice and is a highly valued contributor to the efforts and public conversation surrounding the education of children in Baltimore's public schools.

BERC's research findings identify promising practices and shed light on areas needing improvement, allowing school system leaders, parents, and the larger community to capitalize on successes or design practical responses to the challenges highlighted. The consortium's work provides the credible and high-quality research implications needed for community members to advocate for resources and derive the greatest benefit from promising practices or levers for positive change. Seeking to be a national leader in the broader field of urban educational research, BERC applies cutting-edge methods and extremely rich data to questions of practical and policy importance.

As part of the strategic planning process BERC identified four organizational goals for the coming five-year period. To achieve its mission, BERC will accomplish the following by August 1, 2014:

1. Create and implement the leadership, staffing, fundraising, and knowledge management systems and structures needed to support BERC's operations and organizational growth and sustainability.
2. Collaboratively develop and execute a high-quality research agenda that addresses important topics and questions and yields results that inform policy and practice.
3. Build and maintain a coalition of partners and key stakeholders to support BERC's mission through research, agenda setting, dissemination, and advocacy.
4. Produce a strategic and demonstrable effect on key policies and practices affecting Baltimore's children.

These goals will serve as a foundation for the organization's activities over the coming five years and will drive the specific action plans and tasks BERC's leaders will develop over time. However, as part of the planning process it was not beneficial nor practical to try to develop a specific implementation plan or set of action steps covering the full five-year time period covered by these goals. Therefore, the planning process focused on identifying the set of near-term, high-impact actions BERC must accomplish before December 31, 2009 to launch its implementation of the plan. Additionally, as part of this initial 6-month implementation phase, BERC will develop a detailed action plan aligned to each goal and objective for the following 18-month period from January 2010 through June 2011.

In addition to identifying these long-term organizational goals and specific near-term action steps, the planning process outlined detailed strategies aligned with the priority areas of fundraising, staffing, strategic partnerships, and dissemination activities.