



# Curriculum Review & Renewal

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The Experience of Two Schools

**EXPLOELEVATE**  
INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS COOPERATIVE



Manlius  
Pebble Hill  
School

**JIM DUNAWAY**  
Former Head of School



**JOSH PRETZER**  
Dean of Faculty



BELMONT DAY

**DEBORAH BRISSENDEN**  
Assistant Head of School



**A teacher's task is to lead children from calm and protected waters into the open ocean, through which they will sail to worlds they never imagined.**

Think of coaxing a child from the shallow end of a swimming pool to where the water is a little deeper, then deeper still, then finally to where those little feet can't touch the bottom of the pool, and other resources—in this case, swimming—become necessary.

Like being a parent, teaching is risky business!



**It's not just the steep cost of tuition, the need to convince parents of our "value proposition," but our mission statements themselves, which make ambitious promises to prepare our students for their futures.**

**That requires a parallel commitment to the growth of our schools and the programs they provide.**

**Hence the necessity (and the opportunity!) to make our programs better this year than last—and better still next year.**



## In what professional field are individual and programmatic improvement not the norm?

Imagine going for surgery in a hospital that does not expect its surgeons and departments to be familiar with and practice the latest surgical practices and follow the most advanced safety procedures!

Imagine a professional baseball team aspiring to be as good as they were the year before—no better!



**The process of program  
assessment leads inevitably to  
program improvement and to  
individual professional growth.**







# **BELMONT DAY SCHOOL**

Belmont, MA

**Day: 300 students**

**Grades: PK-8**

**Head of School**

**Brendan Largay**

**Assistant Head**

**Deborah Brissenden**





# Establishing "THE WHY"

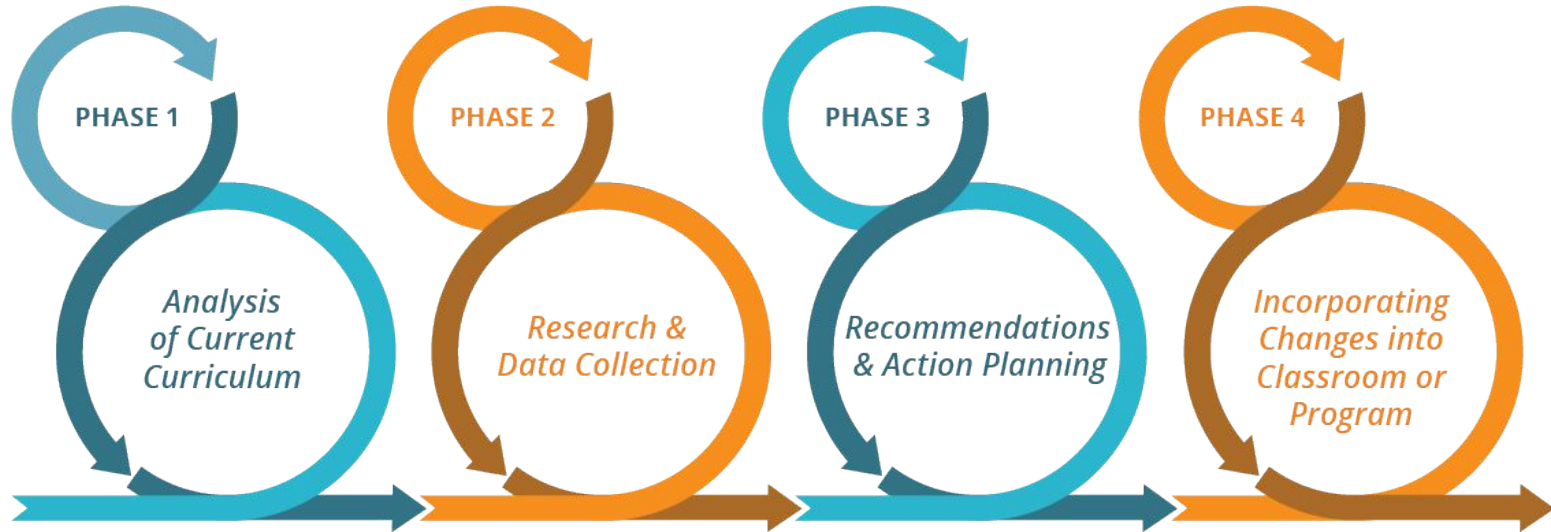
- Where We Were
- Setting the Stage
- Importance of Clarity and Iteration





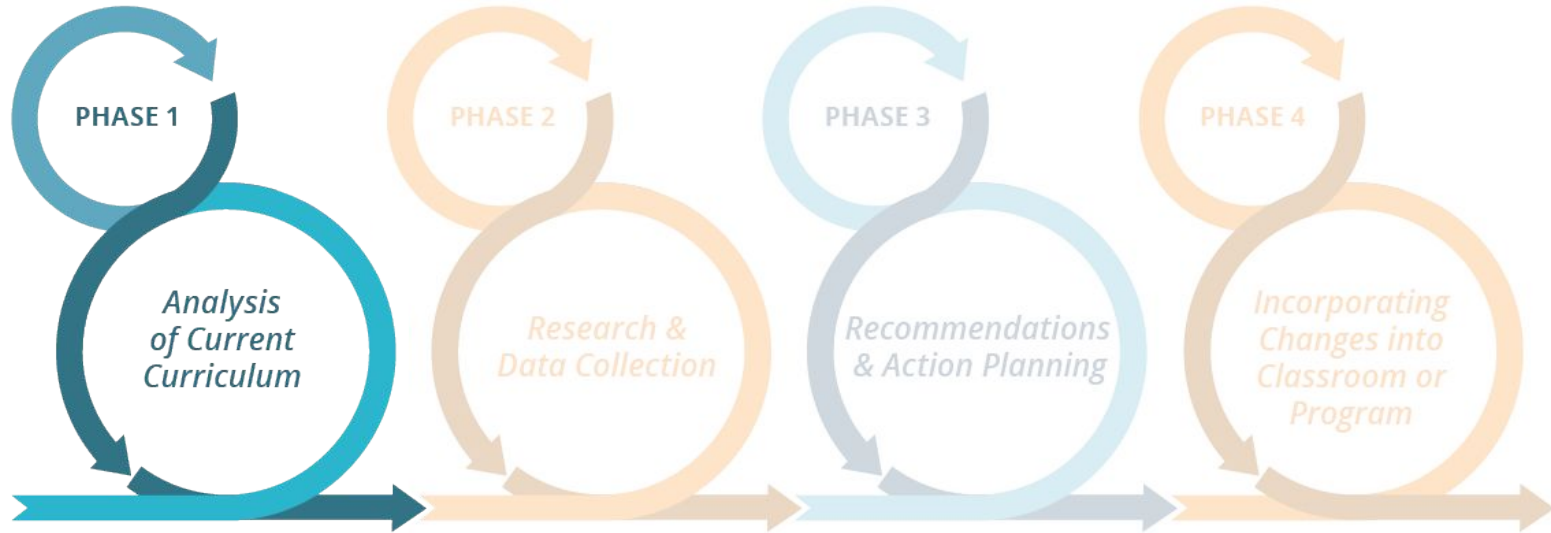


BELMONT DAY



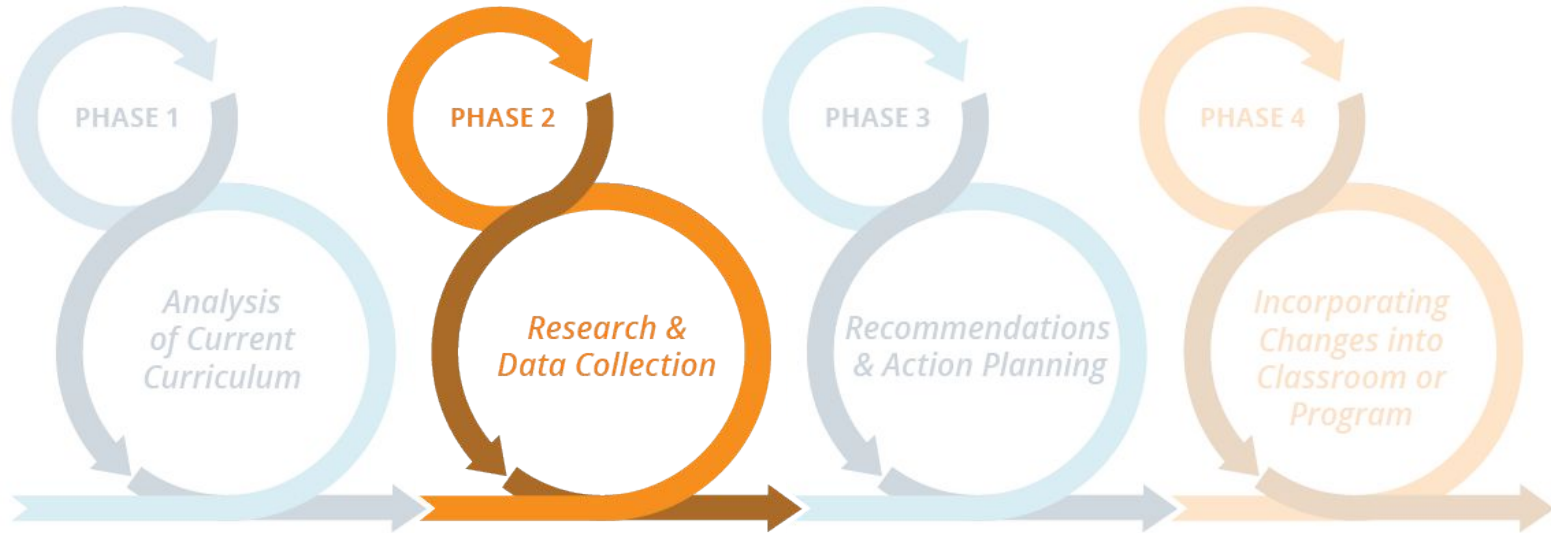


BELMONT DAY



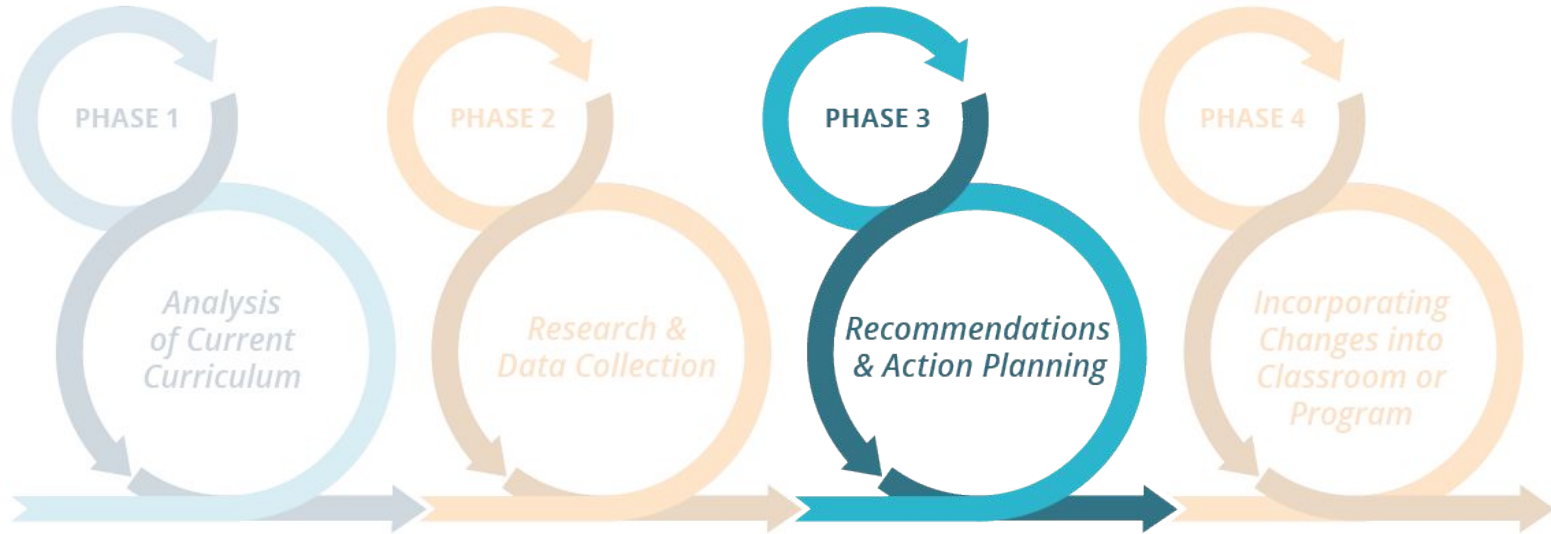


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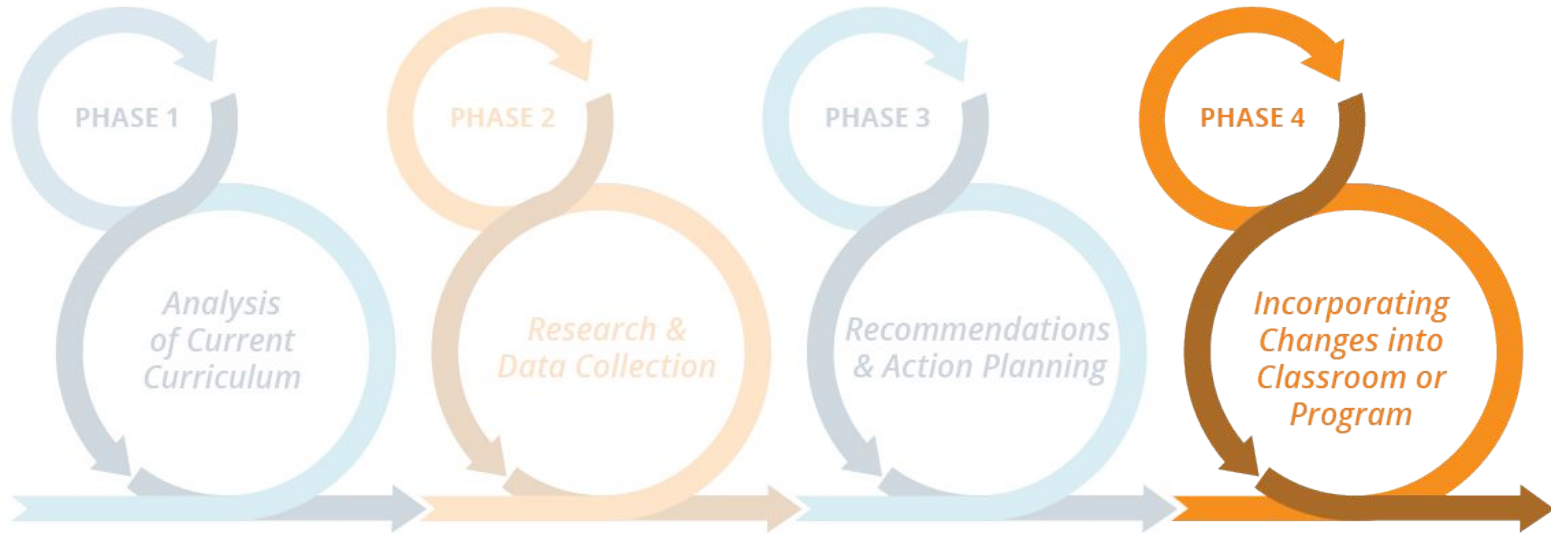


BELMONT DAY





BELMONT DAY





## Benefits

- Impact on students
- Mindset of innovation
- Sharing in the big picture
- The gift of slowing down
- Highlights and spotlights

## Challenges

- Time and momentum
- Difficult conversations
- Looking out as well as in
- Balancing choice and need
- Honoring and developing culture





# CULVER ACADEMIES

Culver, IN

Boarding: 838 students  
Grades 9-12

Head of Schools  
**Doug Bird**

Dean of Faculty  
**Josh Pretzer**

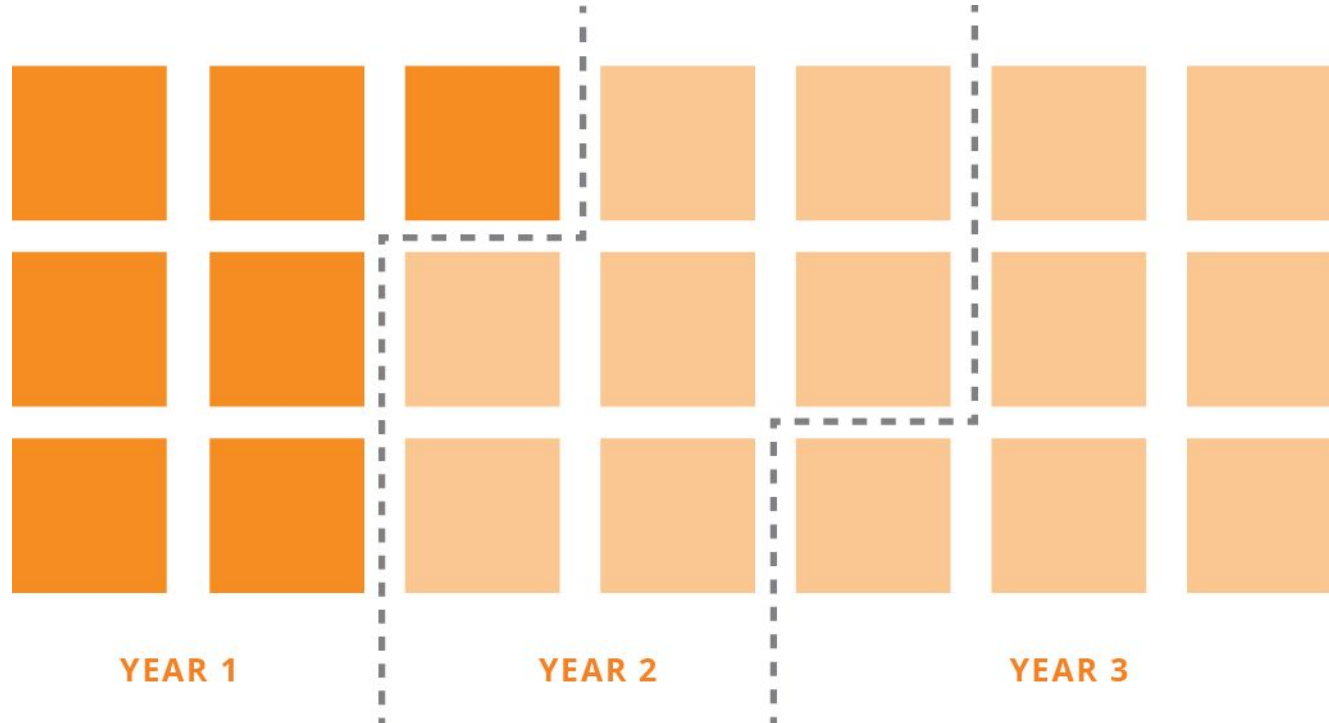






# Culver Academies Process

Approximately twenty departments and programs, seven per year, undergo review on a three-year rotation.





# Triannual Review Committee





Impact on Student Learning





## Benefits

- Opportunity to be self-critical
- Faculty-driven
- Outside reviewers bring objectivity
- Provides meaningful growth
- It works

## Challenges

- Paperwork + workload
- Doesn't encourage coordination between departments
- Can be more short-term than long-term focused
- Role of institutional data in the process



# Q&A

What question do you have about  
curriculum review/renewal?



# EXPLOELEVATE

INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS COOPERATIVE

[elevate.explo.org](https://elevate.explo.org)

 @EXPLOelevate

