



# 2015-2016 Mid-Year Report

Ephrata Area School District  
January 18, 2016

## Introduction

The purpose of the Mid-Year Report is to inform the members of the School Board, and the larger District community, on the status of the District. In doing so, it is important for leadership to invest time looking back at the accomplishments and experiences of the past, recognizing the important characteristics and dynamics of the current reality, as well as, reporting on upcoming events and priorities to help guide the organization forward. At the midway point of the 2015-2016 school year, we will review the Mission, examine Five Key Elements of the District related to the past, present and future of our district, before concluding with a review of the 5 C's of our foundation.

## Mission of the Ephrata Area School District

*It is the mission of the Ephrata Area School District to provide all students a secure learning environment and exemplary academic programs that inspire all students to reach their full potential.*

## Five Key Elements of the System

- Students are the fundamental purpose for our organization's existence and are at the heart of every decision we make. Looking critically at how we provide the type of environment and support to the changing needs of our present students and to set us up for future needs are core functions of leadership.
- The performance of our Staff at all levels is crucial to our ability to achieving our Mission. We recognize that the most direct impact with our students occurs at the classroom level, and thus, raises the importance of having a high-quality teaching staff and skilled leadership throughout the District.
- Our Instructional Programs represent the "what" and "how" of the student learning process. Our programs need to be aligned to established targets, use proven tools and techniques, and offer multiple paths to success in order to accommodate **all** students.
- Organizational Operations represent the alignment between and among the different components of the District. The efficiency of how these functions interact can be a determining factor for our overall success. Operational elements can represent some of the most significant levers in moving our District forward.
- Partnerships within and throughout the District community are important to our ability to achieve our goals. Only through strong relationships can the value of our District be truly recognized and serve as a fundamental driver of change within our community.

## Past, Present and Future Analysis

Using these five key elements as the reporting categories, analysis of the accomplishments, events, and challenges of the past, present, and future are provided below. While several of the descriptors are duplicated in more than one category, it should be recognized that in a complex system, such as a public school district, all components are interconnected in such a way that an accomplishment in one can have a significant impact on several components. Nonetheless, the following is intended to capture the most significant events of the District’s past, present, and foreseeable future:

### Students

<b>Past</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High School continued success with a <u>SPP ranking</u> of 16th out of over 600 schools in the state</li> <li>• <u>Anti-Bullying Program</u> Work and Community event to inform of the system of supports that already exist and how to access them when situations arise</li> <li>• <u>Continued Celebrations</u> of individual and group performance successes in all extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>
<b>Present</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary progress of <u>practical application of technology-based tools</u> to increase connections and relevance of content and learning process</li> <li>• <u>Grading Practices “Charge”</u> to have a “fully endorsed and supported” system for the grading process to be in place for the 2016-17 school year</li> <li>• <u>Early Childhood and Kindergarten progress</u> is continuing through the work of the P2P programs, collaborative grant activities, and the Kindergarten study group work</li> <li>• Growth Mindset and the <u>“What are You Becoming?” Campaign</u> have served to help elevate the importance of having a growth mindset as adults and supporting students in their growth</li> <li>• Starting last spring, <u>student government meetings</u> at the High School feature a monthly meeting with the Superintendent to engage students in the dialogue about how to continually improve our District</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Small Adjustments to the schedules</u> at buildings throughout the District to better prepare students to be successful in gaining the important skills they will need in the future</li> <li>• Ideas for the <u>incorporation of more STEM/STEAM</u> into current courses and possible electives at the HS and MS levels</li> <li>• <u>Increasing Coding and Computer Science Work</u> through curricular and extra-curricular work</li> <li>• <u>Expansion of technology availability and integration</u> to increase meaningful engagement at all levels K-12</li> <li>• Exploration of an <u>“Open Campus” model</u> for qualifying juniors and seniors to provide more autonomy and independent/group work by students to help them be prepared for the next step in their learning journey</li> <li>• <u>Expand the use of Twitter to students</u> and to share innovative practices with the larger community</li> </ul>

## Staff

<b>Past</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Key staff members</u> were hired and transitioned to the EASD Culture (Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Principal, Assistant Middle School Principal, Assistant High School Principal, and Human Resources Director)</li> <li>• <u>Supported the continued growth of teachers and leaders</u> by partnering with Millersville University to develop and host a cohort for teaching with digital tools, as well as, continued hosting of a doctoral cohort through Immaculata University</li> <li>• A <u>“Becoming” survey</u> was issued at the beginning of the year asking staff members to share what areas they plan to grow in during the school year</li> <li>• <u>Continued “Building Days”</u> for open door visits and targeted walkthroughs twice a year in every building</li> <li>• <u>Leadership Team Members completed a book study</u> using “Transforming School Culture” by Anthony Muhammad</li> </ul>
<b>Present</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Professional Learning Community (PLC) Process</u> - Collaborative Team planning occurring every two weeks where teachers who share the same or similar content go through a three-step process where they examine the results of previous instruction, determine the impact of their efforts on student learning, and collaboratively plan for the next period of instruction and assessment</li> <li>• Secondary progress of <u>practical application of technology-based tools</u> to increase connections and relevance of content and learning process moving from optional to accountable</li> <li>• <u>New Leader Academy</u> focused on District Mission, fundamental core values, communication, priorities, and customer service</li> <li>• Growth Mindset and the <u>“What are You Becoming?” Campaign</u> have served to help elevate the importance of having a growth mindset as adults and supporting students in their growth</li> <li>• Progress of the <u>Human Resources Department</u> in building consistency and systems to ensure compliance and efficiency in our personnel management responsibilities</li> <li>• <u>Leadership Team book study</u> using “In Praise of American Educators” by Rick DuFour</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are in the process of taking significant steps in <u>professional development availability and resources</u> for all staff members</li> <li>• Continued support of <u>new instructional strategies and integration of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</u> for all staff</li> </ul>

## Instructional Programs

<b>Past</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated a deployment program to ensure that all students complete specific components of the <u>Common Sense Media course on internet safety</u></li> <li>• <u>Continued “Building Days”</u> for open door visits and targeted walkthroughs twice a year in every building</li> <li>• Brought the educational documentary film <u>Most Likely To Succeed (MLTS)</u> to our region and incorporated a panel discussion on the misalignment of the present factory model of education and the needs of our students in order for them to be prepared for their future</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Present</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Professional Learning Community (PLC) Process</u> - Collaborative Team planning occurring every two weeks where teachers who share the same or similar content go through a three-step process where they examine the results of previous instruction, determine the impact of their efforts on student learning, and collaboratively plan for the next period of instruction and assessment</li> <li>• <u>Early Childhood and Kindergarten progress</u> is continuing through the work of the P2P programs, collaborative grant activities, and the Kindergarten study group work</li> <li>• Secondary progress of <u>practical application of technology-based tools</u> to increase connections and relevance of content and learning process</li> <li>• Established a “<u>Blended Learning Committee</u>” comprised of teachers and administrators from all buildings to explore the emerging role of technology in our School District and effective strategies to integrate to improve meaningful engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Future</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Small Adjustments to the schedules</u> at buildings throughout the District to better prepare students to be successful in gaining the important skills they will require in the future</li> <li>• <u>Expanded Use of our Learning Management System (LMS) and iTunes U</u> to help students connect with each other, the classroom teacher, and the content</li> <li>• Exploring the possibility of a <u>Virtual Snow Day Plan at the High School-level</u> through the strategic use of our LMS for the 2016-17 school year</li> </ul>

### Organizational Operations

<p><b>Past</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Improved the Safety and Security of the Buildings</u> through the installation of an upgraded security system, additional cameras, and an identification checking system for all visitors</li> <li>• <u>Human Resources Audit</u> and resultant program adjustments that has led to more efficient and accurate processes impacting all 500+ District employees</li> <li>• <u>Significant progress of the governance processes</u> between the Board and the Administration including sharing with PSBA and other districts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Present</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<u>Building the plane as we are flying it</u>” amid uncertain budgetary support and the state’s ongoing changes to achievement targets and various compliance requirements</li> <li>• <u>Professional Learning Community (PLC) Process</u> - Collaborative Team planning occurring every two weeks where teachers who share the same or similar content go through a three-step process where they examine the results of previous instruction, determine the impact of their efforts on student learning, and collaboratively plan for the next period of instruction and assessment</li> <li>• Progress of the <u>Human Resources</u> department in building consistency and systems to ensure compliance and efficiency in completing our personnel management responsibilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Future</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Small Adjustments to the schedules</u> at buildings throughout the District to better prepare students to be successful in gaining the important skills they will need in the future</li> <li>• Developing a comprehensive <u>Master Plan of Facilities</u>, including the present condition and warranty status for major structures and systems of the District</li> <li>• <u>District Comprehensive Plan</u> is on track for completion and Board approval prior to the due date of November 30, 2016</li> <li>• Completing the pre-bid work associated with the <u>Track and EIS/MS Athletic Facilities</u> in order to have work complete by the start of the Fall 2016 athletic season</li> </ul>

## Partnerships

<b>Past</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported the continued growth of teachers and leaders by partnering with <u>Millersville University</u> to develop and host a cohort for teaching with digital tools, as well as, continued hosting of a doctoral cohort through <u>Immaculata University</u></li> <li>• Presented our work on <u>Board Governance at PSBA</u></li> <li>• <u>Customer service survey and Community Happenings website pages</u> were launched and are still active to extend our ability to gain and share information related to our performance and relevant events within the community</li> <li>• Supported the significant growth of the <u>Ephrata Area Education Foundation</u></li> <li>• Established an improved relationship with the <u>War Memorial Association</u> and updated the decades-old lease agreement</li> </ul>
<b>Present</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>"3B Blog"</u> provides transparency about the values and character of our leaders, as well as, highlights success of the District with the larger community</li> <li>• Had strategic communication with the <u>Grid Iron Club, Booster Club, and entire football community</u> on the program needs to incorporate into the coach selection process</li> <li>• <u>Continuing conversations with IU13 and other forward-thinking districts</u> on the re-imagination of the education system</li> </ul>
<b>Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued work with <u>Junior Achievement</u> on the internship program and STEM events</li> <li>• Exploring a possible partnership with <u>Apple Professional Learning</u> to implement their student leadership program</li> <li>• Maintain ongoing <u>communication with elected officials and PDE</u> so that we can better understand and influence their perspectives on issues</li> </ul>

## **Review of the “5 C’s” of our Foundation**

### **Culture**

Culture is reflective of the quality of the relationships that exist throughout every aspect of the District. The relationships with and among our staff at all levels are crucial to our ability to achieving our Mission for all students. Additionally, establishing a culture of collegiality AND high expectations for student success is everyone’s responsibility.

### **Communication**

Leadership should present opportunities for members of various stakeholder groups to discuss and learn together as we continually strive for all voices to be heard. Creating new opportunities for teachers and other stakeholders to join into the decision-making conversation is an ongoing focus.

### **Collaboration**

Throughout the District there should be ongoing support on how to develop the elements of high performing teams. Professionals interested in continuous improvement regularly reflect on instructional strategies together. Shared and distributed leadership to multiply the abilities and strengths of individual team members should be the norm.

### **Coherence**

Concerted effort should be made to ensure that decisions and practices are in alignment with the Mission and the stated District Beliefs, to provide support for students and adults throughout the District as we gradually increase expectations, and to continue to develop multiple definitions of success to honor the various strengths and needs within our schools.

### **Consistency**

Decisions and direction of the District should be predictable due to their high level of consistency and their firm basis in the Mission and Beliefs. From a leadership perspective, modeling elements that we say are important increases trust and strengthens relationships. Supporting teachers as they hold each other accountable is how individually preferred practice will be given up for agreed-upon better practice.