



5th Anniversary Mid-Year Report

Ephrata Area School District
January 22, 2018

Introduction

The purpose of this 5th Annual Mid-Year Report is to provide a current overview of the District and status updates on the five key District elements. In the past, it has been beneficial to use this report midway through the year as an opportunity to look back on the work accomplished in the past, assess the present status of work underway, and refine and share the vision forward. Being the 5th year of my Superintendency, this update will provide information and updates on several areas of progress, highlight five present items within each of the five key District elements and look into the future to identify three opportunities on the horizon. In addition to presenting this report to the Board of Directors during the January workshop, this report in its entirety will be shared with the District community when it is posted on the District website.

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.

District Vision

“Achieving Success One Student at a Time”

Shared Understanding of Fundamental Ideas

1. Trust is essential to the success of any organization.
2. Highly Skilled Teachers are the most important component within any school district.
3. The world that our students will experience is changing at a rapid rate.
4. Technology, at its core, is just a tool.
5. Learning is an individual experience.
6. Becoming is better than being – none of us is as good as we can be.

Five Key Elements of the System

1. Students are the fundamental purpose for our organization's existence, and preparing them to be contributing and productive members of our society is the outcome of achieving our Mission.
2. The performance of our Staff at all levels is the single-most determining factor to impact the student experience. Supporting teachers and staff members at reaching ever-increasing expectations is one of the key responsibilities of District Leadership.
3. Our comprehensive Instructional Program represents the "what" and "how" we achieve our Mission. Through continued efforts to incorporate the use of new tools, techniques, and targets throughout the District, we strive to provide each student an experience that is unique to his/her strengths, needs, interests, and future goals.
4. Organizational Operations represent the alignment between and among the different components of the District. In addition to the importance of alignment and consistency is the culture that results from the way in which we operate.
5. Partnerships with individuals and groups both within and throughout the District community are important in our ability to realize our Vision. Through the establishment and/or involvement in varied networks and organizations, we can influence many of the external factors that impact the District.

Past, Present, and Future Analysis

Using these Five Key Elements as the lens for reflection and analysis, what follows is a brief summary of several key accomplishments from the recent past, some of which are ongoing, and topics of work presently underway. Additionally, opportunities in the foreseeable future are provided as a reminder of the continuous improvement element of the District culture. It is important to note that while many of the items presented involve more than one of the Key Elements, an attempt has been made to present each in the category that is most aligned with the topic.

Students

<p>Past & *Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Continued celebrations</u> of individual and group performance successes in all extra-curricular activities* • Secondary progress of <u>practical application of technology-based tools</u> increased connections and relevance of content and learning processes • Growth Mindset and the “<u>What are You Becoming?</u>” <u>campaign</u> served to help elevate the importance of having a growth mindset as adults and supporting students in their growth* • Starting last spring, <u>student government meetings</u> at the High School featured a monthly meeting with the Superintendent to engage students in the dialogue about how to continually improve our District* • <u>Small adjustments to the schedule</u> at the Middle School provided opportunity for students to have choice to better reflect their interests in the Related Arts blocks* • <u>Increased Coding and Computer Science experiences</u> through curricular and extra-curricular work* • <u>Created Mounts Tech Support</u> program for students to engage in the application of technical and customer service skills
<p>Present</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuing participation in the <u>Attollo Recruit</u> program supporting students reaching their full potential through intensive self-discovery and support 2. Implementing the <u>Life-Ready Graduate Certificate Program</u> to provide a path for students to demonstrate additional qualifications for their path after high school 3. Expanding opportunities for students to engage in high-interest areas relating to <u>Computer Science, STEAM, and Coding</u> through events both during and after the school day 4. Improving the <u>student involvement</u> in District and building level decision-making through the expansion of regularly scheduled and project-specific topics across the District 5. <u>Providing increased autonomy</u> for students in several classes taught by teachers who are members of the Flexible Learning Cohort intensive research and development group
<p>Future</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continue examination of the <u>half-day Kindergarten program</u> effectiveness and alignment with growing research on early childhood education to ensure we are starting our students off in a way that supports them in reaching their full potential B. Provide expanded opportunities for <u>students at all levels to have a voice</u> through surveys, regular meetings, student contests, and design challenges in the significant decisions that impact their experience C. Provide a higher percentage of opportunities for students to <u>demonstrate mastery of content in authentic ways</u>, personalized to the student

Staff

<p>Past & *Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of the Growth Mindset and the “<u>What are You Becoming?</u>” campaign have served to help elevate the importance of having a growth mindset as adults and supporting students in their growth (#BecomingEASD)* • <u>Coaching Cohort</u> established with regular meetings to share challenges and progress with influencing* • Provided <u>half-day Staff Development training</u> to review and make explicit the connections among our Mission, Vision, what we value, and the changes we are trying to make in the overall District programming* • <u>Expanded the Guiding Coalition</u> membership beyond those who integrate technology to include a cross representative group of innovative teachers to advance our collective understanding of improving instructional design and student engagement • Launched and expanded the <u>Mountaineer Academy</u> that currently features 12 modules related to District priorities* • Organized a regional <u>Shadow a Student</u> effort to get 100+ administrators in the Central PA Region to participate • Held <u>Leadership Team book studies</u> using “The 4 Disciplines of Execution” by Chris McChesney and “The Energy Bus” by Jon Gordon • Continued <u>Building Visitation days</u>, including conversations and regular classroom walkthroughs with building principals* • Participated on a panel for <u>Aspiring Leaders</u> at the Intermediate Unit
<p>Present</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holding <u>Leadership Team book studies</u> using “Speed of Trust” by Stephen R. Covey, “The Leader’s Guide to 21st Century Learning” by Ken Kay and Valerie Greenhill, “Drive” by Dan Pink, and “Beyond Reform” by the Lindsey Unified School District 2. Continuing to build on the strengthened relationship with the Teachers Association through open and honest dialogue that helped the District achieve a successful <u>Collective Bargaining Agreement</u> (CBA) 3. Holding mid-year <u>Leadership Meetings</u> with all Act 93 members to discuss status of initiative, challenges, blind-spots, and opportunities 4. Organizing and providing training on <u>Life Ready Graduate</u> content, skills, and dispositions for instructional staff grades K-12 5. Continuing to offer a variety of support methods on new <u>instructional tools, targets, and techniques</u> for all staff
<p>Future</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continue to explore opportunities to <u>improve staff assignments and alignment of duties</u> to play into individual strengths and meet continuously changing needs of the District B. Plan and <u>incentivize connected professional learning opportunities for teachers</u> this summer in order to support them in the implementation of tools, targets, and techniques that the District is emphasizing C. <u>Provide more intensive and individual support</u> on instructional practices for teachers at every experience level

Instructional Programs

<p>Past & *Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed the <u>Life Ready Graduate profile and certificate process</u> to achieve additional recognition and communicate the phase-in of new expectations* • Designed two <u>virtual mini-courses</u> related to priority areas of Personal Finance and Civics that will be included in a certificate program as part of the graduation requirements • Integrated ideas for the <u>incorporation of more STEM/STEAM</u> into current courses and possible electives at the HS and MS levels* • Worked with a <u>Math Curricular expert</u> to improve alignment with standards and identify areas for instructional adjustment throughout the K-6 continuum
<p>Present</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training "<u>Flexible Learning Cohorts</u>" of teachers using virtual tools to employ a blended instructional model where learning takes place face-to-face and virtually throughout the year 2. Implemented a <u>Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS)</u> system at the Ephrata Intermediate and Middle schools to address the needs of early adolescence in the areas of social and emotional learning 3. Identified and established a relationship with Project Based Learning expert, Dayna Laur, to provide an <u>instructional audit, targeted feedback, and training</u> on opportunities within the overall instructional practice within the District 4. Conducted a <u>pilot of teacher-designed alternate assessments</u> for the Elementary Language Arts curriculum, which led to the implementation and monitoring of an abbreviated schedule, which provides more instructional time across all classrooms 5. Implementing additional <u>adjustments to the Related Arts schedules</u> at the Intermediate and Middle schools to offer a coherent set of opportunities for students reflective of their interests
<p>Future</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Exploration of additional <u>STEAM and Computer Science programming</u> for the elementary, intermediate, and middle levels B. Full implementation of <u>Life Ready Graduate</u> certificate program at the High School C. <u>Update and/or expand P2P Academy</u> course content to reflect present resources and needs and to maximize new available fiscal support

Organizational Operations

Past & *Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <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 • Completed and maintaining a comprehensive <u>Master Plan of Facilities</u>, including the present condition and warranty status for major structures and systems of the District* • Worked with local law enforcement and other traffic experts to <u>reconfigure the main High School and District parking and traffic patterns</u> to improve efficiency and safety of students, employees, and guests • Explored the needs and possibilities for the <u>reconfiguration of the High School Media Center</u> to better reflect the 21st Century skills and modern learning tools presently in use by EHS students* • Designed a <u>consistent exterior sign format</u> for all District properties that may include digital messaging to better represent our District brand and communicate with our community* • Conducted weekly <u>Customer Service survey</u> with visitors within each of our school buildings* • <u>Implemented the Virtual Substitute Teacher</u> program to allow for increased consistency of the instructional program for planned absences at EHS* • <u>Implemented a Human Resources incentive program</u> for referrals for hard-to-fill positions*
Present	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussing the expansion 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 2. Continuing to identify ways to <u>leverage flexible furniture and collaboration spaces</u> to provide more autonomy for our students to use as they facilitate their own learning 3. Restructured the <u>Professional Learning Community</u> meetings to incorporate action research for teachers to use feedback to continue their growth - these meetings are now called Reflective Planning Teams (RPTs) 4. Exploring the needs and possibilities for the <u>EIMS Media Center</u> to better reflect the 21st Century skills and modern learning tools presently in use by students in that building 5. <u>Critically examining foreseeable facility needs</u> and incorporating the master facilities and systems plan as part of the budgeting process for both short and long-term decision-making
Future	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>Potentially expand the Virtual Substitute Teacher</u> program to allow for students to engage in non-time-sensitive course content for unplanned absences B. Examine the structure of the <u>administrative responsibilities and related logistics</u> associated with the Ephrata Intermediate and Middle schools C. Select and implement a <u>project management software solution</u> to help manage and evaluate the various initiatives and long-term priorities of the District

Partnerships

Past & *Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased <u>communication and transparency</u> with the community through the development and use of the Customer Service survey, Community Happenings page, and the Public Presentations page* • Established and maintaining a productive relationship with the <u>War Memorial Association</u> and the <u>Ephrata Area Education Foundation</u>* • Hosted an <u>EdLeader21 forum and networking event</u> for member districts and other interested district administrators • <u>Collaborating with local district and community partners</u> in the United Way Collective Impact Grant supporting early childhood needs* • <u>Worked with officials at the Ephrata National Bank</u> to make adjustments to the Hibshman Scholarship to have it be better aligned to the intentions of the program • <u>Had regular communications with elected officials</u> regarding proposed legislation and, more recently, the confirmation hearings for the United States Secretary of Education*
Present	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Presenting at community and educational events</u> that (a.) promote and celebrate the work of our students and staff, (b.) establish and strengthen the “EASD Brand” within both the local and broader educational community, and (c.) provide additional opportunities to establish collaborative relationships with other progressive districts and industry partners (Ephrata Chamber, Lancaster Chamber, Rotary, PSBA/PASA state conference, EdLeader21 national conference, AASA national conference) 2. Continue to regularly <u>communicate with elected officials</u> regarding proposed legislation impacting the community, our educational system, or our students 3. <u>Hosting collaboration events and site visits</u> to share expertise and strengthen relationships with others interested in making similar progress across many areas (special education, technology integration, 4Cs and project work, profile of a graduate, leadership development, board orientation, etc.) 4. <u>Expanding the EHS internship program</u> to (a.) provide authentic opportunities to apply skills, (b.) allow students to make more informed career planning decisions, and (c.) provide another way to strengthen relationships with the community 5. <u>Maintaining membership and actively participating in leading regional, state, and national educational networks</u> and formal groups (AASA Digital Consortium, PASA Research & Development Committee, PASA Resolutions Committee, EdLeader21 National Advisory Committee, Center for Digital Education Superintendent’s Advisory Council)
Future	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Continue to establish new relationships and share District success stories through membership, attendance, and presentation opportunities at the local (District-hosted and IU13 events), state (PSBA/PASA, PETE&C, and SAS Institute), and national (EdLeader21 and AASA National Conference on Education) levels B. Targeting businesses for <u>Life Ready Graduate Certificate program endorsement</u> and recognition within and beyond the community C. <u>Expanding the use of our Learning Management System (LMS)</u> to offer virtual course modules for community members