

# Ephrata Area School District

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## District Receives American School Board Journal Magna Award

Ephrata Area School District was named among 18 districts nationwide as a recipient of an American School Board Journal (ASBJ) Magna Award for implementing programs which bring educational equity to students. Over 100 districts in three student enrollment categories – under 5,000; 5,000 to 20,000; and over 20,000 – were considered for Magna Awards.

The Attollo program at Ephrata High School was among the five programs recognized in the under 5,000 enrollment category. Driven by diversity and empowered through education, Attollo is a comprehensive, six-week program that illuminates the pathway to postsecondary education for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who are prospective first-generation college students.

“While it is exciting to receive this type of national recognition for an impactful program, it is really about the program benefits our students experience. We are so pleased to be able to partner with Children Deserve A Chance, creators of the Attollo program, to provide another meaningful opportunity for students to discover their potential and transform their hard work into reality. Graduates of the Attollo program are truly on a new path toward success in life,” said District Superintendent Dr. Brian Troop.

Attollo, which is Latin for “Rise Up,” aims to instill six *Pillars* – Strong Mind, Competition, Resiliency, Accountability, Sacrifice, and Finishing Strong – to help ensure students obtain access to college and triumph as leaders in their schools and communities.

Students in the Attollo program meet before school from 5:30 – 7:00 AM three times a week for six weeks. “Many people would be surprised to know that a group of teenagers is consistently willing to make this commitment at such an early time of the morning, but the meetings are upbeat, energetic, and motivating. It’s inspiring to see the commitment and determination in these students,” said Dr. Scott Galen, Ephrata High School Principal.

Students also set individualized plans of action with a driving goal to be accepted to college. In addition to learning about the college application and selection process, students participate in a mock college interview with District leaders and explore ways to secure scholarships and outside funding to reduce or even eliminate college costs.

Finally, students are challenged to solve a Rubik’s Cube in under two minutes by unlocking its algorithms, a feat only four percent of people in the world have been able to accomplish. At first, many students feel this is an impossible task, but after hard work and dedication, students tackle the challenge and learn to ultimately be empowered to accomplish anything.

“Attollo is an outstanding program that directly embodies our District mission and vision. It opens doors for students who otherwise would most likely become just another statistic and an opportunity missed. Attollo does require students’ commitment and hard work, which shows them they are then able to do amazing things. In turn, they are able to overcome the most difficult challenges and are lifted up, supported, and empowered to become something great,” said School Board President, Mr. Timothy Stayer.

Magna Award recipients will be recognized at the National School Board Association Conference in April in San Antonio, Texas.

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