AUTHENTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES

...Provide Opportunities for Students
...Inspire Life Ready Graduates
...Make a Mark in the Community

Ephrata Area School District serves 4,200 students – each with a diverse way of learning. While some students thrive with traditional teaching and test-taking, others find success learning through projects and collaboratively with their peers. Ephrata Area School District staff aims to meet the needs of EVERY learner and realizes not everything that is important to learn can be measured on a test.

Learning opportunities - like the ones highlighted in this newsletter - are a direct reflection of the District Life Ready Graduate profile that prepares students for success beyond the classroom walls. Over time, this process inspires students’ career choices and encourages students’ ownership and pride in our community.

Learn more in the pages that follow.

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

VISION STATEMENT
Achieving Success
One Student at a Time
Dear Ephrata Area School District Resident:

Thank you for taking some time to look through the 2018 District newsletter. As you will see, the theme of this newsletter is how our District is focusing efforts to prepare all students to be “life ready” - regardless of what they pursue after high school. We know that engaging students in authentic learning experiences that provide opportunities to apply what is learned helps build skills to be successful in the world and to become contributing members of the Ephrata Area School District community.

Last November, our School Board approved a resolution that outlines the need to “aim higher than standardized test measures” and formalized our emphasis on preparing students consistent with the Life Ready Graduate (LRG) profile. Visit the District website or scan the QR code on this page to learn more and watch a video that helps explain why the LRG profile was created and shares community perspectives from District and business leaders.

Over the past year, we have been working across every grade-level to align the traits in the LRG profile to how we engage and inspire students toward their future. These adjustments include the use of new instructional strategies, collaborative project work, modern technology, and more authentic connections to the real world. We have already seen the many benefits of partnering with local organizations and businesses to complete projects that impact our schools and community. Throughout the newsletter, you will see examples of students consistently exceeding expectations when provided real-life challenges.

It is my hope this newsletter helps you understand and appreciate how students are engaging in meaningful learning activities, impacting their community, and becoming owners of their learning journeys. As the District Superintendent, I am proud to serve a community that supports our work to engage and inspire each student to realize his or her full potential.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Troop, Ed.D.
Superintendent

The Ephrata Area School District Life Ready Graduate profile helps align the District instructional program – from kindergarten to grade 12 – to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students will need to be successful in our rapidly changing world.

“It is humbling to be part of a district that has taken on the significant challenge of reaching higher for each of our students.”

– Dr. Brian Troop, District Superintendent

To learn more about the Life Ready Graduate profile, visit easdpa.org or scan the QR code below. Additionally, if you are part of a business that recognizes preparing students to have a positive impact on an ever-changing world requires knowledge, skills, and dispositions that extend beyond standardized assessments, please e-mail LifeReadyGrad@easdpa.org to join area businesses - including Astro Machine Works, Ephrata National Bank, and WellSpan – as a public endorser of the program.
**ANNUAL LEGAL NOTICES**

The following legal notices are available in the District Information section of www.easdpa.org or copies can be picked up at any District building.

- Asbestos Management Plan
- Child Find and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Notice of Non-Discrimination under Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, Age Discrimination Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- School Board Policy 200: Enrollment of Students
- School Transportation Audio/Video
- Security Camera Notification

**HOMESTEAD/FARMSTEAD APPLICATIONS**

Act I of 2006 – Property Tax Relief Act requires school boards to notify, by first class mail, the owner of an eligible parcel of residential property of the existence of the homestead/farmstead exclusion program and the need to file an application for approval with the County Assessment Office.

If you have filed an application for a homestead/farmstead exclusion for your primary residence and were eligible for a tax reduction under Act I, there is no need to reapply every year. For those who have not previously filed, or a property transfer was reported to the Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds, a new form will be sent to you on or before December 31, 2018. You must complete and return the application on or before October 31, 2019 to the Lancaster County Assessment Office to be eligible and approved for a tax reduction. Applications are also available at the District Office and on www.co.lancaster.pa.us.

**EHS Media Center**

The recently renovated Ephrata High School media center is now open and inspiring 21st century learning. A full renovation of the media center and surrounding areas of the school began as part of an interactive student design challenge in 2017. Students collaborated in small groups to create plans for a renovation and worked alongside District administrators and architects to bring their ideas to life. The finished project includes more areas to facilitate small-group and project-based learning, technology, collaboration, communication, and more components of 21st century learning.

A grand opening was held in the fall. High School students served as informative tour guides, greeters, and musicians. Students highlighted different areas of the media center, including the interactive green room, café, Mounts Tech Support, Learning Stairs, flexible furniture, and much more. Attendees were encouraged to “leave their mark” on the writable surfaces – walls, tables, or windows – with their impression of the new areas.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera also attended the event and spent time talking with students and administrators while touring and learning more about the space.

“The new Library Media Center is able to promote collaboration, creativity, and independence while reflecting the wants and needs of our high school students. The variety of flexible seating, private and group spaces, learning stairs, and coffee shop are sure to make this the centerpiece of our high school,” said EHS Principal Dr. Scott Galen.

**MakerBus**

What is the Maker Movement? Sweeping schools and educational institutions nationwide, the Maker Movement inspires students to create without limits.

After the implementation of a student-designed MakerSpace at the Intermediate/Middle School two years ago and elementary STEAM carts last school year, Ephrata Area School District officials are ready to take the Maker concept on the move with the creation of an elementary MakerBus.

“We value learning opportunities for our youngest students to work with their hands and experience trades at an early age. The MakerBus is the next step in providing these types of opportunities,” said Dr. Brian Troop, District Superintendent.

Once completed in March, the MakerBus will travel to each of the four District elementary schools for students to experience hands-on, project-based learning. The MakerBus will offer students learning opportunities beyond the classroom and inspire students to create and work collaboratively.

Additionally, Astro Machine Works Inc. is the project partner who will be working with students and staff through each phase of the project to offer support with the planning, design, and construction. Not only will students’ ideas guide the plans for the MakerBus, working directly with industry professionals will give students an authentic learning experience outside of the classroom.

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**UPDATED WELLNESS POLICY**

Please visit School Board Policy #246 on the District website to view changes to the wellness policy.
Authentic Learning Experiences
Provide Opportunities for Students and Make a Mark in the Community

EPHRATA MIDDLE SCHOOL
Bottle Caps Used to Create Bench
Students are continuing their efforts this school year after discovering first-hand what can be created from recycled materials. In just a few months, students collected approximately 1,700 pounds of bottle caps to create benches for their school. The caps needed to be transported to Indiana, where the benches would be created, so students brainstormed ways to get the caps there. “Because of the expense to ship, they decided it would be better to drive the caps there,” explained Mrs. Brooke Gerlach, EIMS Media Center Specialist. This project has provided an authentic learning opportunity for students in many ways, from engaging classmates and community members through the collection, understanding the process of recycling to create the benches, and utilizing 21st century skills - including collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and more – throughout the duration of the project.

EPHRATA HIGH SCHOOL
Community Mural Project
In conjunction with the revitalization efforts of the Ephrata Development Organization (EDO), Ephrata High School students worked with a regional award-winning muralist to create seven murals that are displayed in the Whistle Stop Plaza. Students and teachers saw the entire project through completion, from cutting and priming the wood panels to sketching, painting, and displaying the murals. Additionally, students collaboratively brainstormed ideas before deciding on a theme that incorporates a variety of sights seen when traveling on a train, a theme fitting for the former Ephrata train station.

“Connecting students’ talents and passions with what they are studying in school always makes learning more meaningful and engaging. That is exactly what this project was to our students. They will forever be able to reflect upon this experience and remember how they gave back to their community,” said Mr. Richard Hornberger, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education.

CLAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STEAM Skills and Knowledge for the 21st Century
This experience, led by Science Explorers, takes all elementary students through motivational and hands-on, collaborative lessons where students expand science knowledge and engage their Life Ready Graduate skills and dispositions. Grade-level STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) activities have included catapult experiments to enhance force, load, and fulcrum concepts and building electrical circuits to power a propeller and small motor as it relates to the concepts of electrical, chemical, and sound energy. “This type of innovative and authentic learning develops skills that will be valuable in preparing students for future career opportunities,” said Clay Elementary School Principal Tracy Blunt.
AKRON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Green Screen Team

A group of Akron Elementary students are learning how to use a green screen, Padcaster, and the accompanying hardware and software to produce school infomercials and complete video assignments. Once the initial group of students is proficient with the process, they will be able to help interested classmates become involved and grow participation across the school. Not only does this opportunity encourage students’ innovation, critical thinking, and creativity, it fosters collaboration, communication, and overall technological proficiency – all important components of a Life Ready Graduate.

EPHRATA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Ephrata Revitalization Project

All students in sixth-grade are participating in a community project to help revitalize Ephrata. Students took a downtown walking tour in the fall to identify improvements they would recommend. They were encouraged to think out-of-the-box and have come up with a variety of innovative ideas, including a dog park, purple and gold crosswalks, a community garden, building restorations, and much more. Students are now using knowledge, skills, and dispositions across all subject areas to develop their ideas into proposals. A SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats – will guide these proposals that will ultimately be shared with Ephrata Development Organization leaders this spring. “An authentic project like this gives kids a voice, ownership, and pride in their learning and their community,” said sixth-grade teacher Tanya Goss.

HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Monarch Habitat Garden

Students at Highland Elementary designed a garden, which is planted on school property, to grow and nurture the habitat of Monarch butterflies. Students researched, planned, and designed a native plant garden that features milkweed, the Monarch host plant. Students have now participated in garden field studies to observe and journal the Monarch life cycle. The newly-planted milkweed yielded dozens of caterpillars, which were collected and brought into the classroom for further observation. Students were fascinated to watch the caterpillars pupate into chrysalis, emerge as adult butterflies, and be released back into the wild to begin their annual fall migration to Mexico. “This was the best school project I’ve ever done. It made us feel like we were helping Monarchs by becoming citizen scientists,” said Highland fourth grader Lyla Clement.

FULTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Classroom Sign Collaboration

A simple online order could have easily been placed when there was a need for classroom signs at Fulton Elementary School, but instead, staff collaborated with students in real-world scenarios to get the job done. The project kicked off with a conference call between students, staff, and the manufacturer. After learning about product options, students worked within a budget; interviewed and obtained feedback from teachers, the Superintendent, and School Resource Officer; and created three design options. They presented their ideas to all 450 Fulton students, who voted on their favorite design. “These signs will make our school even better because finding the right classrooms will be easier. Plus, we all worked together to make it happen,” commented Fulton fourth grader Josiah Wiker.
German Award

The Ephrata High School German program has been designated a German Center of Excellence by the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG). EHS scored the highest rating – “excellent” – in every category evaluated. “This is truly a program that is designed to meet the needs of students. There is clear evidence that this program has strong support from the administration, professional colleagues, parents, and students and has strong ties to the wider community,” said Keith Cothrun, AATC Executive Director.

“It is a real honor that – from across the United States – Ephrata has been chosen to receive this award. After many, many years, a strong German program has been built with high expectations for students and opportunities to spend time in Germany,” said EHS German teacher Sally Wise.

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 a program – Attollo at EHS - which brings educational equity to students. Driven by diversity and empowered through education, Attollo – as part of the Children Deserve a Chance Foundation – is a comprehensive, six-week program that illuminates the pathways to postsecondary education for 11th grade students who are prospective first-generation college students. Learn more at easdpa.org.

Sportsmanship Award

The District finished the 2017-2018 athletic season with two recognitions by the Lancaster-Lebanon League: the Spring Sportsmanship Award and the Overall School Year Award. “We are grateful and humbled by this recognition. Mountaineer student athletes continue to make us proud in so many ways. While winning games may be what traditionally receives the spotlight, receiving these awards proves the sportsmanship of our students does not go unnoticed and deserves to be commended,” said Mr. Steve Sweigart, District Athletic Director.

Seventh Grader Writes & Publishes Book

Paige Reddig wrote and recently published, “Three Sisters of Doom,” after winning a school writing contest last spring. She worked with a publisher, editor, and illustrator to complete her book over the summer and held a book signing at Javateas. Just days before her book was printed, Paige was notified by the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE) that she was named the 2018 Distinguished Middle School Student of the Year and was recognized at their annual conference in Pittsburgh.

“Paige is very eager to learn and gives her all in everything she does. She is a very talented writer and a positive school leader,” said Mrs. Marcie Lloyd, Ephrata Intermediate School teacher. To learn more or purchase “Three Sisters of Doom,” geared for readers ages 8-15, visit Amazon.com.

Ephrata School Board

The Ephrata Area School Board of Directors have collectively served 78 years.

Front row: Judy Beller, Tim Stayer, Glenn Martin

“Our Board continues to maintain a focus that is centered on Ephrata Area School District student learning and achievement. We strive to make decisions which demonstrate responsibility to the community and also align with the District mission to provide opportunities for all students to reach their full potential,” said Tim Stayer.
The District offers a wide variety of early education opportunities for children from ages 12-months to five years, including play dates, learning sessions, and much more.

**AND, IT IS ALL FREE!**

Learn more:

- [www.easdpa.org – Services & Departments – Early Childhood Education](http://www.easdpa.org)
- [EarlyChildhood@easdpa.org](mailto:EarlyChildhood@easdpa.org)

*Children must reside within the Ephrata Area School District*
WINTER WEATHER INFORMATION

Information about weather-related closings, delays, early dismissals, and event cancellations will be available on the District website, social media accounts, and the following:

- ABC 27
- FOX 43
- WARM 103.3
- WDAC 94.5
- WGAL 8
- WHP 21
- WJTL 90.3
- LancasterOnline.com

The District launched a new-and-improved website this school year! Check it out at easdpa.org and use the online calendar to obtain upcoming testing dates, half-days, School Board meetings, and much more. www.easdpa.org

If you have a phone number listed in the Sapphire Portal account of a District student, opt-in or opt-out of text messaging at any time by texting “yes” or “no” to 67587. To make updates to your student’s account, visit the parent/community portal on the District website or contact your child’s building.

District staff continue to strive to provide a high level of customer service to their families and community members. An online customer service survey is available on the District website to help gather more feedback from parents and community members about their experiences within the District.