Mid-Year Report

Ephrata Area School District
January 13, 2020

Introduction

The purpose of this Annual Mid-Year Report is to provide a current overview of the District and status updates through the lens of the five key District elements. Over the years, it has been beneficial to use this report as an opportunity to look back on some highlights of the work accomplished in the <u>past</u>, assess the <u>present</u> status of work underway, and share potential <u>future</u> opportunities. In addition to presenting this report to the Board of Directors during the January workshop, this report 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

This collection of statements is intended to reflect our current understanding of our context and the relevant ideals that are essential to consider in our work. These serve as common influences in the decisions we make and the direction we progress. This list was updated in the Spring of 2018 after being used for nearly four years with staff and administration.

1. TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS help support the social/emotional needs of our students and are essential to our overall success.

2. A HIGHLY SKILLED, COMPASSIONATE, and EMPATHETIC STAFF is an invaluable component of our school district.

3. TECHNOLOGY can be a powerful instructional and learning tool.

4. The rapidly changing world increases the importance of SKILLS and DISPOSITIONS.

5. Learning happens most rapidly when it is PERSONALLY RELEVANT and AUTHENTIC.

6. A GROWTH MINDSET should be modeled and promoted.

Five Key Elements of the System

1. _Students_ are the fundamental purpose for our organization's existence, and preparing them to be LIFE READY by the time they leave us is our ultimate mission. Graduates who are prepared to be a contributing and productive member of 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 in 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 modern tools, engaging instructional techniques, and meaningful targets as outlined in the Life Ready Graduate profile, we strive to provide each student a relevant learning experience that is unique to his/her strengths, needs, interests, and aspirations.

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 establishment and maintenance of a culture that rewards innovation and strategic risk-taking.

5. _Relationships_ with individuals and groups both within and throughout the District community are important in our ability to realize our Vision. Through active membership in professional networks and organizations aligned with our work, we can learn from and influence the external factors that impact public education.

Past, Present, and Future Analysis

Using these Five Key Elements as the lens for reflection, what follows is a brief list of highlights that represent key accomplishments from the 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 our District culture. 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. To help substantiate progress in each of the five areas, an artifact or two are included after each section.

Students

Past & Ongoing	1. <u>Continued celebrations</u> of individual and group performance successes in all extra-curricular activities 2. <u>Student government meetings</u> at the High School featuring a monthly meeting with the Superintendent to engage students in the dialogue about how to continually improve our District 3. <u>Increased Coding and Computer Science experiences</u> through curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, including the Hour of Code, the Coding Contest, and expanded Robotics clubs 4. <u>Creation and expansion of the Mounts Tech Support</u> program for students to engage in the application of technical and customer service skills 5. Expanded 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 6. Implemented the <u>Life-Ready Graduate Certificate Program</u> to provide a path for students to demonstrate additional qualifications for their path after high school 7. Continue our District participation in the <u>Attollo programs</u> supporting students reaching their full potential through intensive self-discovery and support 8. 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 9. Conduct regular monthly <u>Assistant Superintendent Council</u> meetings with a cross section of students to get a more accurate view of the student experience at grades 5-12
Present	1. 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 2. <u>Creation of "family groups"</u> at the elementary level that include cross-grade level opportunities to explore and focus on the LRG dispositions 3. Continuing to <u>expand the number and variety of internship opportunities</u> for students to explore potential career paths and apply knowledge and skills in a real-world setting 4. Incorporate findings and insights from the sleep study, surveys, and presentations, into the <u>Healthy Living, Wellness & Self-Awareness</u> trait of the Life Ready Graduate profile

	5. 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
	6. Provide opportunities for students to <u>demonstrate mastery of content in authentic ways</u>, personalized to the student through the implementation of competencies and learning-targets
Future	1. Provide additional opportunities for students to lead in the <u>demonstration of mastery of content in authentic ways</u>, personalized to the student through the implementation of competencies and learning-targets
	2. Empower students to more <u>actively participate in education decisions impacting</u> what and how they prepare for productive adult life through the use of digital career portfolio and Cornerstones at the High School
	3. Continue to expand the <u>inclusion of students</u> to lead and represent the District in presentations at the local, regional, and national level
	4. Launch the "<u>Ephrata Innovates" program for students</u> to offer suggestions and pilot programs that are more closely aligned to the District Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and the features of the Life Ready Graduate

Staff

Past & Ongoing	1. <u>Continuation of the Growth Mindset and the use of #BecomingEASD</u> to help elevate the importance of having a growth mindset as adults and supporting students in their growth
	2. <u>Coaching Cohort</u> established with regular meetings and specific training to share challenges and progress with influencing
	3. Provided <u>half-day Professional Learning 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
	4. Continually adding virtual options to the <u>Mountaineer Academy</u> that currently features 12 modules related to District priorities
	5. Continued <u>Building Visitation days</u>, including conversations and regular classroom walkthroughs with building principals
	6. Planned and facilitated <u>Leadership Team book studies</u> using "What School Could Be" by Ted Dintersmith
	7. Organizing and providing training on <u>Life Ready Graduate</u> content, skills, and dispositions for instructional staff of grades K-12
	8. 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).]

Present	1. Providing <u>leadership opportunities, direction, and support to teachers</u> in the restructuring of the curriculum to include competencies and learning targets for all existing course content like Cornerstone projects and competencies 2. Planning and facilitating <u>Leadership Team book studies</u> using "Accelerate" by John Kotter 3. <u>Implementing a restructured Guiding Coalition</u> to more closely align with the specific instructional needs at the grade-band level and increase teacher participation in activities aimed at improving instructional design and student engagement 4. <u>Conducting information sessions and ongoing dialogue with staff</u> members related to the results of the District Sleep Study and the potential new start time schedules for our schools 5. Continuing to explore opportunities to <u>improve staff assignments and alignment of duties</u> to utilize individual strengths and meet continuously changing needs of the District and grow the network side of the organization 6. Creating <u>opportunities for cross-district collaboration</u> through the development of a three-district partnership for our February 14 Professional Learning Day
Future	1. Continue <u>working with outside supports to help inform the next steps</u> in our journey to clarify our Instructional Model, implement a Competency-Based curriculum, and work to personalize learning 2. <u>Provide more intensive and individual support</u> on instructional practices for teachers at every experience level through a targeted and coherent Professional Learning Plan 3. <u>Engage professional staff members in the creation of a final school-day schedule</u> that makes the most out of the potential shifted start times and instructional day length

Instructional Programs

Past & Ongoing	1. Developed the <u>Life Ready Graduate profile and certificate process</u> to achieve additional recognition and communicate the phase-in of new expectations 2. Supporting two <u>virtual mini-courses</u> related to priority areas of Personal Finance and Civics that are included in a certificate program as part of the graduation requirements 3. Implement courses and electives that<u> incorporate more STEM/STEAM</u> into the High School and Middle School levels 4. Maintain and support a <u>Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS)</u> system at the Intermediate and Middle schools to address the needs of early adolescence in the areas of social and emotional learning

	5. Implemented <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 6. <u>Developing an instructional model and a theory of action</u> to help guide work in all areas of the instructional program 7. Worked with a <u>Science Curricular consultant</u> to improve alignment with standards and identify areas for instructional adjustment throughout the K-6 continuum 8. Implementing changes resulting from 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 9. <u>Updated P2P Academy</u> course content to reflect present resources and needs and to maximize new available fiscal support
Present	1. <u>Fully implement an instructional model</u> to help guide work in all areas of the instructional program and for all Professional Learning events 2. <u>Restructuring the curriculum to include competencies and learning targets</u> for all existing course content as well as, the features of the LRG profile 3. <u>Expanding Computer Science Curriculum</u> to provide a complete continuum K-12 and a widened variety of options at the elementary and secondary levels 4. Full implementation of <u>Life Ready Graduate</u> certificate program in Grades 11 and 12 at the High School 5. <u>Finalizing Cornerstone projects at each grade-level</u> that meet common District criteria and can serve as an application vehicle for required grade-level and course content knowledge 6. <u>Working with stakeholders to prepare a recommendation for Board approval</u> on a start time schedule that better aligns with what brain and sleep science says is best for our students, especially adolescent students
Future	1. Continue exploration of additional <u>STEAM and Computer Science programming</u> for the elementary, intermediate, and middle levels based on student interest 2. <u>Integration of the Sleep Study, survey, and presentations,</u> into the Healthy Living, Wellness & Self-Awareness trait of the Life Ready Graduate profile 3. <u>Identify and/or build assessment measures or indicators</u> for each of the 12 features of the Life Ready Graduate profile for each of the three grade-bands (K-4, 5-8, & 9-12) 4. <u>Create a data-dashboard</u> to provide live access to student progress toward each feature of the Life Ready Graduate profile

	5. <u>Identify programs/resources/curriculum/partners to improve the equity</u> in terms of student access to all of the supports and service available within the District

Organizational Operations

Past & Ongoing	1. <u>Improved the safety and security of the buildings</u> through the installation of an upgraded security system, additional cameras, hardened entrances, and an identification checking system for all visitors 2. <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 3. Built a <u>consistent exterior sign format</u> for all District properties that includes digital messaging to better represent our District brand and communicate with our community 4. Conducting weekly <u>Customer Service survey</u> with visitors within each of our school buildings 5. <u>Continuing to use the Virtual Substitute Teacher</u> program to allow for increased consistency of the instructional program for planned absences at the High School 6. Continuing to annually 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 7. Implemented a restructured set of the <u>administrative responsibilities and related logistics</u> associated with the Intermediate and Middle schools
Present	1. Redesigned, constructed, and are learning how to best use the <u>EIMS Media Center</u>, which was built to better reflect the 21st Century skills and modern learning tools presently in use by students in that building 2. <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 3. <u>Operating an "Ephrata Innovates" campaign</u> to allow teachers to be released from a current expectation in order to experiment with a new practice or process that could help us reach our mission or align to components of our LRG profile more efficiently 4. Ongoing work to ensure that the connected parts of the organization are all accounted for in <u>planning for an adjusted time schedule for the 2020-2021 school year</u>

Future	1. <u>Potentially expand the Virtual Substitute Teacher</u> program so students could engage in non-time-sensitive course content for unplanned absences 2. <u>Working with newly identified architects</u> to engage relevant stakeholders in the design work to meet the needs of the music program, EHS@Washington, Technology Services, Student Support Services, and the District Office

Relationships

Past & Ongoing	1. 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 2. Established and maintaining a productive relationship with the <u>War Memorial Association</u> and the <u>Ephrata Area Education Foundation</u> 3. <u>Collaborating with a local district and community partners</u> in the United Way Collective Impact Grant supporting early childhood needs 4. Represented the District and the state by <u>participating in Legislature visits</u> during the AASA advocacy event in Washington, D.C. 5. <u>Had regular communications with elected officials</u> regarding proposed legislation and, the confirmation hearings for the United States Secretary of Education
Present	1. <u>Continue to present 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 2. Continue to regularly <u>communicate with elected officials</u> regarding proposed legislation impacting the community, our educational system, or our students 3. Actively <u>serving on the Mainspring of Ephrata Board</u> to represent the shared interest in supporting a thriving Ephrata by connecting students with opportunities to interact with and impact their community 4. <u>Hosting collaboration events and site visits</u> to share expertise and strengthen relationships with others interested in making similar progress across many areas 5. <u>Supporting other interested districts</u> in the creation of their version of our Life Ready Graduate profile 6. <u>Continuing to expand 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

	7. Continuing to solicit businesses for <u>Life Ready Graduate Certificate program endorsement</u> and recognition within and beyond the EASD community
	8. <u>Working with the Lancaster Workforce Development Committee</u> to help align county-wide efforts toward the skills our students need to be successful now and to the future
Future	1. <u>Formalize partnerships in support of Cornerstone projects</u> at each grade-level K-8 so that students have a series of positive experiences with community organizations as they move through our system
	2. <u>Regionalize the Life Ready Graduate Certificate</u> for students and employers beyond EASD by serving on the Career Ready Lancaster Council
	3. Continue to establish and strengthen relationships and to <u>share District success stories</u> through membership, attendance, and presentation opportunities at the local, state, and national levels