



State of the District: 2014-2015 Mid-Year Report

Ephrata Area School District
Dr. Brian Troop, Superintendent
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It is important for the leadership of any organization to invest time looking toward the future and casting the vision for where the organization is going. Equally important is the leader's willingness to look in the mirror and critically evaluate his/her own effectiveness as well as the overall health of the organization. At the midway point of the 2014-2015 school year, I present the following perspectives on the five key priority elements of the district, an updated progress report in some other important areas, and finally a summary of the five aspects of the school culture that represent how we go about our work.

Five Key Priority Elements of the System to Address

Students are the fundamental purpose that our organization exists and are at the heart of every decision that we make. Looking critically at how we provide the type of environment and support to the changing needs of our students is a core function of the Leadership Team. The performance of our Staff at all levels is crucial to our ability to achieve our Mission for all students. We recognize that the most direct interaction with our students occurs at the classroom level, and thus, raises the importance of having a high-quality teaching staff and skilled leadership at all levels. 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. Partnerships within and throughout the District and the entire Ephrata 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.

Continued Progress on Initial Priorities

First priorities for my role as a new superintendent were focused on areas that dealt with transition and the establishment of new relationships. Assembling a Leadership Team and developing a common understanding of our District Mission served as primary objectives during my first six months in office. In the year since the *First 100 Days* report, the following priorities were continued:

Assemble and Organize the Leadership Team

Several staff members were transitioned into new roles of Internal Customer Service, Community Relations Coordinator, and Director of Instructional Technology. Adjustments and updates were made to the District Organizational Chart. An Administration/Logistics and Leadership Development meeting structure and schedule were established and executed.

Support the Leadership Development and Strengthen the Team

One-on-one reflective meetings were conducted with each administrator to reflect on the year, gain their perspective on the progress of the District, and to learn how I can support them more effectively. Three days of Summer Leadership training were held for the Leadership Team, including a

combined session with the School Board. Leadership Development training is provided monthly to all leaders using the Multipliers framework.

Continue Personal Leadership Development

I was selected to participate in the National Superintendent Certification Program through the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). I also actively participated on all work groups and project committees within the District and regularly attended Superintendent Advisory Council meetings coordinated by Intermediate Unit 13.

Established a District/Mountaineer Pride Campaign

We continued bi-weekly K-12 Mountaineer Pride Days, and I conducted "Be a Mountaineer" talks in classrooms throughout the District and issued the challenge to each student.

Communication and Visibility within the District

I continued to make regular visits to buildings and extra-curricular events and conducted meetings through building visits to share the rationale behind big decisions in the District. I also placed an emphasis on increasing the quantity and usage of media releases through internal and external media outlets.

Focus on Instructional Programs

I continued monitoring 9th Grade transitions and led group discussions with selected 12th Grade and 8th Grade students on the importance of starting their high school career off on the right foot. In addition, I was actively involved in the *Blended Learning Study Group* charged with crafting the initial direction for District efforts. I also oversaw the use of technology, both existing and new, to increase the level of relevance and rigor with which students are engaged with our content.

Communication and Partnerships within the Community

I increased collaboration between the District and the Ephrata Area Education Foundation. I represented the District at various meetings within the District and throughout the community, including both the Lancaster and Ephrata Chambers, and facilitated the first annual combined meeting between members of football boosters, War Memorial Association Board, and the Gridiron Club. Plans are underway for a similar meeting for baseball organizations.

Promote the "5 C's" of Our Foundation

The "5 C's" represent a series of values and beliefs that the District Administration has identified as essential to establishing and maintaining the type of Learning Community that will help us achieve our Mission.

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.

- Establishing a culture of collegiality AND high expectations for student success is everyone's responsibility.

Communication

- Members of various stakeholder groups are provided with opportunities to discuss and learn together.
- We continually strive to increase opportunities for all voices to be heard.
- We are creating new opportunities for teachers and other stakeholders to join into the decision making conversation.

Collaboration

- Ongoing support is provided on how to develop the elements of high performing teams throughout the District.
- There are regular and structured opportunities for teachers to reflect on instructional strategies together.
- We share leadership and responsibilities to multiply the abilities and strengths of individual team members.

Coherence

- We strive to ensure that decisions and practices are in alignment with the Mission and the stated District Beliefs.
- We are providing support for students and adults throughout the District as we gradually increase expectations.
- Multiple definitions of success continue to be developed to honor the various strengths and needs within our schools.

Consistency

- Each of us is being empowered to hold each other accountable to policy, practice, procedures, and commitments.
- Individually preferred practice will be given up in light of improved and agreed-upon better practice.
- Decisions and direction of the District should be predictable due to a high level of consistency and the firm foundation in the Mission and Beliefs.