

EAST PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT

2007 STATE OF THE DISTRICT

Why is the East Penn School District sometimes referred to as “the district of choice”? Let me provide you with a brief update on the many activities that are taking place within the district, and that question may be answered.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Each school district, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, must develop a Strategic Plan that guides the work of schools to help every child succeed in meeting the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. This six-year plan was developed in 2002 by a committee of East Penn community members, parents, students, teachers, and administrators. A Mid-Point Review was completed in February 2006, and the district is currently working to meet the goals/objectives in the plan which ends in 2008.

STUDENT POPULATION

For the first time in the history of the East Penn School District, the student enrollment exceeds 8,000 students. Our current enrollment as of February 1, 2007, is 8,037*:

➤ Emmaus High School	2,771 Students
➤ Lower Macungie Middle School	1,160 Students
➤ Eyer Middle School	747 Students
➤ Elementary Schools (7)	3,359 Students

-Alburtis School
-Jefferson School
-Lincoln School
-Lower Macungie Elementary School (Kindergarten Only)
-Macungie School
-Shoemaker School
-Wescosville School

*This number includes 872 disabled students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 428 students identified as mentally gifted.

BUDGET PROCESS

The 2006-07 East Penn School District budget is \$99,372,119. Approximately 21% of the revenue is derived from state and local sources. Local tax revenue subsidizes the remaining 79% of the annual budget. Currently, 85% of the local tax revenue is generated by real estate taxes.

Act 1 of 2006 will result in a required voter referendum in the May 2007 primary election. This referendum will allow the voters to decide whether to derive a larger portion of our local revenues from an increased Earned Income Tax in lieu of a portion of the current real estate tax.

EMPLOYEES

The East Penn School District is a major employer in the Lehigh Valley area:

- Professional Staff 550
(Administrators, Teachers, Counselors,
Nurses, Psychologists)
- Support Staff 463
(Administrative Assistants, Aides,
Maintenance, Food Service, Technology)

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

There are 133 East Penn students receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) services. This number has tripled over the last three years. Our ESL learners speak approximately thirty different languages and are served by six teachers who are dedicated to this program. The top three world languages spoken this year in East Penn are Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT (PSSA)

The students in the East Penn School District participate in the PSSA program that is administered throughout the Commonwealth. Results of the 2006 PSSA tests are the basis for reporting accountability for Pennsylvania schools to meet the standards set by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations. The key numbers to consider when measuring progress of students are the percentage of students scoring at or above the “Proficient” level.

East Penn met the required Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets in both mathematics (45%) and reading (54%) for Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. All schools, except Emmaus High School, met the AYP targets for student subgroups. Special Education and Economically Disadvantaged student subgroups did not meet the AYP targets in mathematics and reading.

The principal of each of the schools and his/her respective staffs have developed a building level Student Achievement/Assessment Plan (SAAP) that is a blueprint to increase student performance. The plans were developed after the professional staff analyzed the data and researched “best practices” teaching strategies. The implementation of the schools’ SAAP is underway and will continue throughout the school year.

SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST

The last Scholastic Aptitude Tests taken by students in Grades 11 and 12 were reported for 2006. The following results indicate we surpassed both the SAT Score Averages for both Pennsylvania and the rest of the United States:

<u>Emmaus High School</u>	<u>Pennsylvania</u>	<u>National</u>
Critical Reading: 526	Critical Reading 493	Critical Reading: 503
Math: 522	Math: 500	Math: 518
Writing: 504	Writing: 483	Writing: 497

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships. High School students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary

SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). This past year we had thirteen semi-finalists and thirteen commended students. Ten students have been named finalists.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

In 2006, we had 531 students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses. Of the students who took the AP tests, 87% scored a 3 or above. Through AP Exams, students have the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at most of the nation's colleges and universities.

GOVERNOR'S SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE

Each year the Pennsylvania Department of Education accepts applications and selects 11th grade students to participate in the summer Governor's Schools of Excellence in the arts and academic areas. This is a highly competitive and rigorous program. For 2006, East Penn had 9 students who were selected to attend. This number was greater than any of the high schools in the Lehigh Valley.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The participation of students in both clubs and athletics is quite significant. We have approximately 3,066 students at the middle and high school levels that are members of 32 fall and winter athletic teams and participate in 71 clubs (including band and chorus). These activities allow a great deal of our students to round out the academic portion of their school life with activities that help them learn team concepts and further their interests in a variety of areas.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE UPDATE

During the past four years, faculty members have completed each year one of the four focus areas in the Professional Development Institute (PDI). These four focus areas are:

✓ **Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching**

This area of focus has served as the basis for the district's revised supervision/observation model that is aligned to the Pennsylvania Department of Education professional evaluation system.

✓ **Understanding by Design: Teaching and Assessing for Understanding**

This area of focus provides the model for each curriculum review/revision that is both cyclical and an on-going process.

✓ **Brain-Based Teaching and Learning**

This area of focus explores research on how the brain functions, how students learn, and how the utilization of various instructional strategies can be utilized in the classroom to meet the diverse needs of students.

✓ **Academic Literacy: Strategies for Improving Academic Literacy in the Content Areas**

This area of focus was initially a secondary focus but it is now also required for fourth and fifth grade teachers. It provides teachers with various research-based strategies designed to improve student reading ability by helping students move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" in the content areas.

Each one of these focus areas has had direct application/implications in the district's instructional program.

The East Penn School District also provides professional development activities for its support staff. During the 2006-07 school year, programs have been offered in the following areas:

- ✓ School Board Operations
- ✓ Understanding the Generational Puzzle
- ✓ Leadership Development
- ✓ Basic People Skills; Organization
- ✓ At-Risk Teens
- ✓ Book Discussion Groups

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Staff development programs that seek to inform and improve the work of the classroom teachers have been part of the culture of the East Penn School District for many years. During the 2006-07 school year, the building administrators will be involved in a series of seminars designed specifically to enhance their leadership skills. The qualities that are studied and applied are character, charisma, communication, commitment, competence, attitude, vision, culture building, problem solving, and discernment.

The sessions are delivered on a monthly basis and will seek to identify the indispensable qualities of leadership followed by the exercises and activities that will connect each quality to the principalship.

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK

Based on the 2006 High Schools That Work assessment that was completed by Emmaus High School seniors last spring, the guidance department of EHS has been distinguished as one of the top ten-high-scoring sites in the area of guidance and advisement in the United States. Student achievement scores, combined with responses on student surveys and teacher surveys, provided one of the highest ratings in the national network of over 1300 participating schools in the program.

STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY

As part of the total learning experience for students, the East Penn Board of School Directors and the staff are committed to providing a school environment that promotes:

- Student Wellness
- Proper Nutrition
- Nutrition Education
- Regular Physical Activity

In keeping with this commitment, the East Penn Board of School Directors adopted Policy 246, Student Wellness and the EPSD Guidelines for Competitive Foods. East Penn will meet the recommendations stipulated by the policy progressively over a three-year period. Staff and parent education regarding the policy is planned.

The Wellness Policy Committee offered guidelines concurrent with those of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. The goal of the committee was to have students exposed to and participate in healthy behaviors during the school day, including:

- Physical and Nutrition Education
- Cafeteria Foods
- Fitness Activities
- School-based Activities

THE FUTURE

STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

East Penn is in the process of converting the Student Management System from the current Pentamation product to their updated version called eSchoolPlus. The conversion and training process began in September 2006 and will take approximately two full years to complete. A phasing in of certain features began in February 2007. The eSchoolPlus product offers performance tracking measures to comply with No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It also broadens teacher access to include an integrated grade book, an assignment system and enhances the ability to more easily communicate with parents. The Home Access feature will enable parents to be more informed about their child's attendance, grades, assignments and any pertinent discipline information.

GROWTH IN ENROLLMENT

East Penn has grown by nearly 1,200 students since 2001. The district is projecting an enrollment growth of nearly 40% in the next decade. The majority of this growth has occurred in Lower Macungie Township and the Borough of Albutis, considered to be the fastest growing township and borough in the Commonwealth.

To accommodate this growth, the Board of School Directors has approved the building of a new elementary school on Sauerkraut Lane in Lower Macungie Township that will accommodate over 700 students. The district re-opened the Lower Macungie Elementary School and converted it into a Kindergarten Center that now provides services to over 360 students. This has created eight classrooms in four of the elementary schools. The district has recently gained permission to place two re-locatable classrooms at the Albutis School that will provide four additional classrooms.

Recently, the school district purchased 93 acres of land that will potentially be a site for two additional secondary schools, athletic fields, and parking for over 1,000 vehicles.

SUMMARY

This update is a snapshot of the many programs and activities that are available in the East Penn School District. For any further information, please do not hesitate to contact your child's building principal or my office.

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