



Superintendent-Director End-of-Year Report June 10, 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this End-of-Year Report is to provide the District School Committee with an update of progress made within the context of our [Strategic Plan](#) and the Superintendent [SMARTIE](#) Goals approved by the Committee in September 2020. Our goal is to continue the work in preparing our students for the skills needed to enter a competitive workforce, post-secondary institution, and be members of the larger community. In short, our work is creating *a culture of academic and technical excellence*.

School Reopening

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School (ENSATS) prepared for the 2020-21 school year in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. In light of this, our focus has been first and foremost on the importance of reopening school safely. We continued to follow the guidance of our state leaders and we are proud to announce that we moved to a 75% return on March 17th and, subsequently, to full in-person learning on April 28th. These modifications were approved by the District School Committee according to current safety protocols established by MA DESE.

To return to full-time learning, we reinstated two of the five [Action Teams](#) to coordinate this process. We continued to work with our partners in education, vocational schools and CTE Superintendents. Our Scheduling Action Team, comprised of Sandy Goldstein, Shannon Donnelly, and Kim Dickson made sure classes were scheduled in rooms that were appropriately sized. This included adding classroom space on the South Campus. The Facilities Action Team, along with Debora O'Reilly, Mike Zupancic, and the administrative team worked to move furniture where needed for full capacity.

The Children's Learning Center at Smith Hall saw its last child on April 16, 2021. At one point, the center served 32 children so that their parents could work. Parents were appreciative of this, as it lessened the anxiety of returning to school.

Even with our full return in April, several students continued to participate in our Virtual Learning Program (VLP), which is an online school for our students who were not able to participate in the in-school model. Our VLP provided academic and career technical content through Edgenuity, an online learning platform. All VLP students were provided with

after-school support from ENSATS content-area teachers and special education teachers, along with oversight from our CTE Directors to help our students negotiate this online learning environment.

For our [Phase 3 Reopening](#), we continued to work with all stakeholders to ensure a successful reopening of in-person learning at school for our students. Our biggest challenge of the full return was space to have lunch given the current social distancing protocols. To accommodate our additional students, we added one lunch service, tents, purchased additional tables, and used the Media Center as a sixth lunch location.

As we began the full reopening, we also completed the Fall 2 season of sports, which included Football, Sideline Cheer, Girls Volleyball, and Indoor Track. This was a successful season and allowed our athletes to participate in the sports they missed during the Fall of 2020. In mid-April, our athletes began the 4th and final season of sports. The spring sports included Outdoor Track, Lacrosse, Boys Volleyball, Competition Cheer, Softball, and Baseball. In total, approximately 900 students participated in athletics during the 2020-21 school year. In addition, we were able to begin in-person Student Activity meetings and run the 4:00 late buses in the spring. Until April, all Student Activity meetings had been held virtually. The in-person meetings for activities, as well as the continuation of our sports seasons, gave students the much-needed sense of normalcy and a connection to their peers.

In February, we began impact bargaining with the HFT to create a new schedule. The team of ten included administrators, teachers, and a school counselor. This schedule allowed the district to look at the needs of students, including the addition of a freshman seminar course, civics, financial literacy, a two-year sequence of Spanish, and [CTE Pathway](#) courses related to the technical and common strands of the [CVTE Curriculum Frameworks](#).

The Equity Team worked together to create learning opportunities for staff members during in-service time. This included a variety of lessons related to courageous conversations about race using Glenn Singleton's work. The focus of the learning was to introduce the staff to ways to approach conversations that may be challenging using the Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations: stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, expect and accept non-closure. I continue to work with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), as I serve on the Planning Committee on Race and Equity. This work has helped guide the District as we review our current practices and provide equitable delivery of services and instruction to all students. Our purpose is to prepare students for a diverse workplace, community, and world. This begins upon entry to ENSATS and continues throughout their high

school experience. We will continue to work with an equity lens and seek support from external resources.

Budget 2022

When the Governor passed the FY21 budget in December and approved by the District School Committee in January, the District received approval to give back one of the furlough days. Our FY22 budget work began in November with departmental requests. From there, the Directors met regularly and monitored the state allocations through March when the FY22 budget was approved by the District School Committee. This [budget](#) was the first to be at minimum contribution and will provide the sending communities with modest or no increase to their per pupil assessment from the 2020-21 school year.

The District worked diligently in presenting a budget to the District School Committee that represented the overall needs of the school while recognizing that our sending communities may be experiencing financial challenges due to COVID-19. This resulted in a minimum contribution assessment budget.

As we continue to see enrollment growth, we work with DESE to determine rates for our agricultural students. At this time, DESE has increased the tuition to \$19,054 which will approximately net the district an additional \$570,00 in tuition revenues. These revenues will offset the budget and be used for additional staffing needs.

On January 11, 2021, we received notification that our [E&D](#) has been certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue in the amount of \$920,000. We will be carefully reviewing the FY22 budget process and will determine the most appropriate use of these funds. These funds will be used to offset assessments and update infrastructure related to HVAC systems for Alumni Gymnasium and Gallant Hall.

In March, 2021, the District received notification from Guisti, Hingston, and Company Certified Public Accountants that we received a [clean audit](#). This was due to the hard work of our business office and creating protocols that have been implemented related to the budget.

At this time, the 2021 budget is in excellent shape to end with surplus funds. Every effort is being made to review funding needs and make purchases accordingly.

Professional Learning

During the winter of 2021, all Special Education and Academic teachers received training on the co-teaching model, with Judy DeLucia from Seaside Education Consultants. This will improve the collaboration between general education and special education teachers and will in turn benefit all students. This work also led to some changes in our schedule, where we will limit the number of academic teachers that are paired with special education co-teachers to support the new co-planning model that will be in place for the 2021-22 school year. Our new schedule will provide common planning time for all co-teaching pairs. While the co-teaching work was happening, Career Technical and Agricultural teachers participated in curriculum map planning for all of their CTE courses. These maps will be modified to include CTAAC Integration work, equity, and Writing with Colors. The maps will eventually be available online for public view. The next step of this process will continue in the Fall of 2021, when CTE teachers complete UbD (Understanding by Design) templates for their respective CTE courses. Additional details are available in the [Professional Learning Report](#).

Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning

For the last fifteen months, a small team of administrators, teachers and one student participated in the Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (KCL), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's signature commitment to higher standards for all students through deeper learning. This cohort consisted of twenty-one schools from across the Commonwealth. ENSATS was the only career technical and agricultural school selected to participate in Kaleidoscope. During the bimonthly convenings we worked on creating equity-based integration learning projects that would help our students to deepen their understanding of the meaningful way in which technical and agricultural learning involve academic content and skills. KCL also developed an Equity Pause tool to ensure that our lessons are equitable and relevant to all students.

Integration Learning

The CTAAC Integration Team completed four Integration Academies during the 20-21 school year. Each Academy consisted of teams of students and teacher facilitators who met after school and on the weekends to complete a designated Integration learning project. For example, the Fall Integration Academy students built self-braking go-karts and the Winter Integration Academy consisted of a scavenger hunt that utilized various types of technology to decipher the location of hidden codes that led to a final group discovery. The Spring Integration Academy had students working collaboratively to move materials, Survivor-like, across the ropes course and build a structure with their materials. Each Academy allowed students to work collaboratively

with their peers, deepen their understanding of technical and academic concepts, while actively participating in complex projects that involved student voice and choice. In addition, some of the students who participated in the Fall Integration Academy, went on to plan the task for the Winter and Spring Integration Academy.

Early College Course Offerings

As part of our continued collaborations with North Shore Community College, over 40 sophomores successfully completed their first college course, Understanding Higher Education and Career Planning, during the Fall semester, earning both high school and college credit. Additionally, several Partnership students took a Speech course this past fall and Partnership students together with some ENSATS juniors successfully completed a Composition 101 course this Spring.

Rising Grade 10 and Grade 11 ENSATS students are already enrolled in Understanding Higher Education and Career Planning and Speech and Composition 101 again next school year. It is our hope that we can continue to grow and expand community college options for our students through the budget process and grant opportunities.

Strategic Plan (District) and Quality School Plan (School)

The Strategic Plan and our Quality School Plan (QSP) continue to frame what we do, including alignment to goals and developing a theory of action. We will begin our work to develop two planning teams as we move into our final year in 2021-22 of both the Strategic Plan and the QSP.

Committee Work

The Portfolio Committee continued to meet regularly this year to develop an improved plan for Senior Showcase Portfolios. In addition, the Schedule Redesign Committee met to develop the draft of the new 2021-22 school year schedule that was negotiated this spring. The TSEP (Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Program) Committee met regularly to update the Educator Evaluation Manual and create helpful folders of sample evidence for educators. Subcommittees will continue to work in 2021-2022 based on need.

Admissions Policy

The Admissions Committee has met three times since January. In working with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, we created the [Admissions Interactive Dashboard](#) to share with them how we categorize our admissions data. This work was done in response to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's work on regulations that may shift admission policies at some point in the future throughout

Massachusetts. It is the recommendation of the Admissions Subcommittee to maintain the existing policy. We will continue to monitor state guidance and regulations.

Technology Department Update

The Technology Department has continued to offer a variety of technology training throughout the 2020-21 school year. The school's Instructional Technology Specialist, Ms. Tammy Garron, has offered training on Schoology, Zoom, various Google Products, Library Databases, and many more.

ERate funding was utilized to upgrade the Gallant Hall network infrastructure. These upgrades ensure that we continue to have fast and reliable network access for our students and staff throughout our entire campus.

The Technology Department also has implemented a new integrated helpdesk and asset management system. This addition has allowed us to keep better track of student and faculty technology-related needs and also manage students and staff device assignments.

Safety and Security

This year we have continued our commitment to making the ENSATS campus as safe as possible for our students and staff with the installation of additional security equipment, including cameras and keyless entry systems. Since January, we have installed an additional twenty-two cameras on both the North and South Campus. This school year, we have installed a total of 49 new cameras throughout the campus. These new cameras allow quick and easy access to live feeds and saved footage from any device that can be used by our safety and security team.

In collaboration with the Danvers Police Department and the Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council, police K-9s were on campus at approximately 9:00 am on Monday, March 29, 2021, to search common areas, parking lots, classrooms, and CTE areas for the presence of illegal substances. During this drill, each officer and K-9 team was escorted by an administrator. The search lasted approximately 30 minutes. This drill is part of our ongoing focus on emergency preparedness and part of our commitment to keeping our school community safe.

In the Spring, several staff members attended Threat Assessment Tool training through the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth, Inc. This training prepared the team to create a threat assessment tool that will be implemented during the 21-22 school year.

Facilities, Farms, and Grounds Department

The FFG Department has been hard at work on multiple projects since January. Below are some of the projects in progress. It should be noted that our Director left in April and the team has taken on additional responsibilities to meet the demands of the District.

Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Roof Building Project

This project is near complete and under budget. The remaining funds will be used to purchase windows, doors, and a fire alarm system at both Alumni Gymnasium and the Gallant Hall. Site work is expected to begin in the summer with installation throughout the fall.

Gallant Hall

Gallant Hall has been updated to include new flooring and paint. The District will continue to invest in this building as we expand usable space on the South Campus. This includes HVAC systems, new fire alarm systems, bathrooms, windows & doors, and clock & PA system.

Exterior Campus

The District received funding to purchase a branded Food Truck that will include providing produce at no or low cost to our Gateway Cities. Our Horticulture Specialist has been busy preparing the production greenhouse for year round growth through vertical planting and production. The orchard has seen deer fence and 300 trees planted this spring. It was a collaborative effort with students and the Farm Crew. We are appreciative of Richardson's Dairy and Brooksby Farms for their collaboration and support of this project.

Special Projects

During the spring, bidding went out for a large paving project on the South Campus. Using the lowest qualified bidder, the District was able to have enough funding to include Manning Street lot which had not been paved since the school opened. This will provide valuable upgrades to the parking areas and create a clean traffic pattern. Leftover MSBA project funds were used for this project.

The District continues to work with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) related to available land to expand the learning space. At this time, there is no immediate availability of this space and we will work with DCAMM to

monitor it carefully. This will provide space for the bus garage and the transportation department to be housed in one location.

Signage

The District will continue to brand the buildings including exterior and interior signage, wayfinding signage, and signage of athletic fields. This will provide a unified and consistent look to the school.

The Larkin Cottage

The Larkin Cottage will be 60% backfilled by June 18, 2021. At this time, a summer crew made up of students and staff will work to begin framing. This will help the project move along. Funding for the staff will be primarily through grants including the Cummings Foundation and MassHire's Youthworks program.

The FFG completed its first farm share for beef and will continue to offer this service. They worked together to maintain athletic fields and hay the fields.

Stakeholders

Students

Having completed our graduation ceremony on June 4, 2021, 343 students graduated from ENSATS. Our projected enrollment for the 2021-22 school year is 1650 students. ENSATS is now the largest public high school on the North Shore with over 100 more students than Peabody High School, which is the second largest.

Our students managed changes in learning at different times during the school year and acquired new skills due to participation in remote learning. We added Schoology as a new Learning Management System for this school year which will continue to be utilized in coming years. Despite a challenging year, student attendance exceeded state guidance.

Students will leave us for Summer Break on Friday, June 18th with relaxed restrictions during outdoor learning and continuing to take mask breaks for indoor learning. Regardless, it is believed that students are happy being in school full time compared to our original hybrid model.

Parents

The Essex North Shore Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) continued to expand their outreach this year and offered several student scholarships. They have provided gift cards for all of our staff and hosted a staff breakfast during Teacher Appreciation Week. The

PTO was also a valuable partner in planning our senior events. They provided graduate signs for our seniors, hosted our senior breakfast, donated the balloon arch and banner at graduation and provided numerous donations for the Prom.

Teachers

We have continued to have regular bi-weekly meetings with the Hathorne Federation of Teachers (HFT) leadership. These ongoing meetings have been helpful in understanding the needs of the teacher on a regular basis. Teachers showed cooperation and flexibility as we moved from our Phase One reopening with 50% of our students in-person each day, to the Phase Two reopening with 75% of our students in-person, and finally to the Phase Three reopening with the full return of all students to in-person learning. The work of union leadership and instructional staff is to be commended. Our students were appreciative that they were able to return to full in-person learning in April and will be well-prepared to return to this full-reopening model in September.

Five members of HFT participated in impact bargaining related to a new schedule. This [MOU](#) was signed in early June and will continue through 2024. This included [CTE Pathway](#) courses, Civics, Financial Literacy, and Freshman Seminar.

The District approved funds to support wellness and enrichment programs for teachers after school. Since February, 56 participants have taken advantage of classes such as yoga, spin, kettlebell, barre, adirondack chair making, fire pit creation, gluten free baking, and more!

We celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week in early May, with special treats, daily raffles, and an ice cream sundae bar. On Friday, May 28th we thanked all of our staff with a luncheon by Big Pig Barbeque

Leadership Team

Since January, our Instructional Leadership Team is reading [Transforming Ineffective Teams](#) that is from The Skillful Leader training. In June 2021, our Instructional Leadership Team will attend a two-day workshop with Deb Reed, Executive Vice President of Research for Better Teaching. This directly relates to the work she is doing with our instructional staff. This was rescheduled from February in order to accommodate a live experience.

The District Leadership Team has been reading [Dare to Lead](#) by Brene Brown and

meeting regularly to integrate the ideas from this book into their practice.

Staff and Other Stakeholders

We are currently in negotiations for the AFSCME Transportation Unit.

Community Organizations and Governmental Officials

Site visits are complete to those communities that have opened their offices. I will continue to work with individual communities as needed.

I continue to work closely with the Chambers of Commerce, THRIVE Committee, MassHire, Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA), SkillsUSA, MASS, REDI (Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Massachusetts Partnership for Youth to ensure that we are informed and have the most up to date educational and workforce information.

We engage community partners including a training center for the Essex County Sheriff's Department, Company2Heroes, Coordinated Community Family Engagement program, North Shore Community Action Program (NSCAP), Local 22 Laborers' Union, IBEW, Local 7 IronWorkers Union, Groom Construction, Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC), and North Shore Community College (NSCC). NSCC will continue to lease space for Cosmetology programs.

Grant Awards and Applications

[Between January and June 1, 2021](#), we have received just over \$1.9 million in competitive grants and \$1.22 million in entitlement grants. These grants have assisted in the expansion efforts of admissions, partnership programs, equipment, curriculum development, workforce training for adults, COVID mitigation efforts, and have offset salaries. We continue to seek funding opportunities to support programs and staff.

We were pleased to host Governor Baker and his Cabinet to conduct a press release related to the Career Technical Institute (CTI) initiative which provides funding to schools and community organizations to keep vocational buildings open three shifts.

It is with a sincere appreciation of all staff that I submit this end of year report for review. The work that is included in this report is comprehensive and was done with many hands. I would like to personally thank the administrative team, teachers, clerical, foodservices, paraprofessionals, FFG, and transportation for their hard work and dedication to our students. It



is evident that each subsection of the broader team has worked together toward the common goal of **technical and academic excellence**.

In closing, I thank the District Committee for giving me the opportunity to serve Essex North Shore. I am looking forward to starting the 2022 year refreshed and energized.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi T. Riccio, Ed.D.
Superintendent-Director