



Superintendent-Director Mid-Cycle Report January 13, 2022

Introduction

The purpose of this Mid-Cycle Report is to provide the District Committee with a mid-year update of progress made within the context of our [Strategic Plan](#) and the Superintendent [SMARTIE](#) Goals approved by the Committee October 2021. Our goal is to continue preparing our students for the skills needed to enter a competitive workforce, post-secondary institution, and to be committed members of the larger community. In short, *technical and academic excellence*.

School Reopening

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School (ENSATS) left for the summer with anticipation of returning to school maskless. A quick change at the end of August by MA DESE and CDC guidance had us adjusting our practice once again to include mask wearing inside school buildings. Despite this unexpected change, the District continued with the plan to begin school with a focus on student learning, including in-person instruction and a refocus on our graduate profile, which includes the expectation of graduating students who are kind, tenacious, responsible, collaborative, culturally proficient, and entrepreneurial.

With a new schedule, the addition of Pathway courses, and our highest enrollment to date, we worked through negotiations and labor relation meetings to provide additional common planning time and preparation time. At the beginning of the school year, the District experienced, much like other schools across the nation, a transportation labor shortage. To the credit of our staff, many hands pitched in to get students to and from school safely. Further, the District engaged in a long-term partnership with Culture 7.co, under the direction of Michael Eatman, to begin the collaborative planning process to create a learning community known for being diverse, equitable and inclusive.

We held monthly labor relations meetings with HTF and have begun with the new leadership team of AFSCME. At this time, we will be working on a possible COVID sick bank to assist those that may not have accrued sick leave. We will also be looking at negotiating with HTF and AFSCME in the near future.

It is important to acknowledge that the ongoing pandemic has certainly taken a toll on our instructional staff, our support staff, our administrators, our students, and their caregivers. It has touched everyone's lives and impacted our attempts to restore a sense of normalcy to teaching

and learning. Recognizing the work that is needed to move beyond the pandemic and to develop strategies and practices that will bring a positive school climate, I have created a culture goal to begin to address the significant challenges our school and district have encountered. This work has just begun, and we anticipate that true change will continue to require a commitment from *all* stakeholders.

Focus on a Positive and Inclusive School Culture

My first goal is to promote a positive and inclusive school **culture** beginning with engaging the leadership team, our labor unions, including Hathorne Teachers Federation and AFSCME, those nonunion and contractual employees who are unrepresented, along with staff, students, and families in the many ways in which we can work to build this culture together.

This work began in the summer when we selected our consulting relationship with Michael Eatman of Culture 7.co. Michael presented at our annual Leadership Institute and during our opening week professional development to help us bring issues of **diversity, equity, and inclusion** into greater focus within our learning community. Since the school year began, Michael Eatman helped us to shift to a more fine-tuned measure of school culture, and we paused the Panorama survey. Working with [SixSeconds](#) and [Culture 7.co](#), we are creating a “Vital Signs” survey that will be distributed to various school community groups. Work will begin with the newly formed Culture Action Team in the near future and the survey will be administered later this winter.

We have participated in a number of [professional learning sessions](#), the first being from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, working with school districts to practice “Equitable Recruitment” for our Human Resources and Teacher Induction staff. We also participated in a training offered by [MASS REDI](#), this is from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents focusing on Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, so that ENSATS can develop a long-term plan for anti-racist, inclusive practices. We also recalibrated our interview process for staff here at school to ensure that there is always a two-tiered process for hiring that ensures and applies an equitable lens.

We renewed our commitment to Diversity Equity and Inclusion by creating a new DEI team, comprised of former members who helped lead our school culture work last year and new members who are passionate about helping our staff and students to become more culturally proficient and follow inclusive practices. Within the DEI team, there are four coordinators who have begun to lead the work necessary toward an inclusive school model. This team has met with Michael Eatman and Culture7 and will continue to assist in professional learning opportunities. Again, time will be needed.

The Admissions Subcommittee met regularly this year to review our recruitment and admissions practices. Our admissions outreach this year involved 16 middle school presentations, an expansion of our Gateway program to additional districts, and the use of our Bilingual Family Liaison to conduct follow-up communications with applicants' families who speak a language other than English at home.

The Commonwealth approved new regulations for admissions to vocational schools across the state. Working with the admissions subcommittee, a core group of stakeholders, and MAVA, the District created a new [Admissions Policy](#) that is inline with the state regulations. To date, we will be interviewing over 1500 applicants for 450 spots.

In addition, over the summer, we sent a team of stakeholders to attend the [National School Safety Advocacy Council Conference](#). At this conference they learned the latest innovative approaches to school safety and technology. We also expanded staffing of our Wellness classes to promote healthy living choices for our students.

We re-established our Student Leadership groups to add student voice to our school culture planning process. Our DEI Coordinators, a leadership group from the DEI Team, are working with a core group of student leaders to address and plan for peer mediation, mental health programming and support systems. We also formed a Reopening Action Team to help us navigate the post-surge world of lifting the mask mandate in school for vaccinated students and staff. DESE just announced two days ago that they were extending the mask mandate in public schools through February 28th, so our plan is to be ready if and when the mandate before is lifted.

We rebooted our Professional Learning Action Team to help us access staff input in the ongoing professional development process. This team meets monthly, surveyed staff about professional development needs, and will create a professional development plan. We also continue our practice of distributing leadership to any faculty member seeking to acquire new licenses as administrators.

We offered our annual Skillful Teacher training for new teachers within their first three years. We also held for the first time a Skillful Leader course with Deb Reed of [Research for Better Teaching](#), a leader in instructional practice. Several teachers have also completed the OSHA train-the-trainer class.

We held school-wide assemblies in January to remind students of our Graduate Profile and to reboot our behavior expectations including racist comments, social media posts, homophobic comments, and overall respect for self and others.

Our leadership team read and made connections to our learning community using the book: [*Change, How Organizations Achieve Hard-to-Imagine Results Despite Uncertain and Volatile Times.*](#)

We changed our Teacher Focus Elements for our Educator Evaluation process to include two Elements related to equitable practice in the classroom.

To meet the 80% vaccination rate for the state, we coordinated multiple clinics including a flu clinic. Over 310 participants have taken advantage of these clinics.

Focus on Content-Specific Skills through Pathways

My second goal involves engaging all stakeholders in offering students meaningful career and academic pathways through supporting content-specific skills acquisition, common assessments, and [CTE Pathways coursework](#).

The addition of new CTE Pathways courses are now offered to students in grades 9-12 for the first time ever at Essex Tech. These Pathways courses are intended to provide students with additional learning time to further develop their career content-specific skills. Each Pathways course represents a progression from core career skills, spanning presentation and technology in grade 9 and civics and personal finance in grade 10. In grades 11 and 12 these Pathways courses become CTE-cluster specific, delving into the Common Strands of the [Vocational Technical Education Frameworks](#). Furthermore, students receive foreign language in Grade 9 and 10 which exceeds the state requirement for vocational school. These courses ultimately represent opportunity and access for all students as they prepare for the future workforce upon graduation. As a reminder in order to make this happen, administrators spent three years working with teachers to develop a new schedule that allowed for these additional blocks for both Pathways and Theory coursework.

Early last month through the Massachusetts Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment and in partnership with [Institution for Savings](#), we hosted a Credit For Life Fair in our gymnasium to strengthen financial literacy. This Fair was well attended and allowed our enthusiastic seniors an opportunity to connect with professionals who came to Essex Tech to share their wisdom about the skills necessary to navigate the complex world of personal finance.

To promote the mission of Essex Tech to the broader community we hosted for the first time in two years an in-person [Open House](#) on Saturday, November 20th. We had approximately 2500 parents and their children pre-register and come to school to us in two ticketed events that allowed future students access while we maintained social distance for one of our first "live" community events at school since March of 2020.



The Cooperative Education department has been busy in coordinating students to return to work placements. To date, we have 126 seniors placed and another 22 juniors who will be placed in the near future. This is up from 82 seniors and 13 juniors at this time last year.

This year to help with student access, we gave admissions presentations to sixteen middle schools, including our two Gateway communities. We hired our first Bilingual Family Liaison to assist us with our admissions outreach efforts for students whose first language at home is not English. We also established protocols for coordinating targeted English Learner recruitment. We also created promotional materials about our school and its mission in multiple languages. Additionally, we expanded our After Dark offering access at Essex Tech for students from the communities of Marblehead and Swampscott.

For professional development and our standing commitment to deeper learning, we continue to expand our Integration Learning offerings to students with our seasonal, grant-funded academies after school, on weekends, and over school vacations. We added Common Planning Time to teacher's schedules to facilitate our special education co-teaching model and allow teachers additional time to work together on their shared curriculum co-planning.

We continue to expand Dual Enrollment and Early College access. We added to grade 11 this year two sections of Speech 101 and Composition 101 *in addition to* the grade 10 Understanding Higher Education course now in its second year. Currently, there are 51 students enrolled in Early College classes. We have also been invited to be part of a DESE-sponsored Early College Work Group in the hope one day that DESE grants us Early College designation. We also continue to participate in the DESE sessions related to Early College that they have been holding for those school districts seeking designation. Just this week, we submitted our application for further consideration of courses.

We continue to develop as a data-driven learning community. Teachers meet monthly in Professional Learning Communities to analyze data from common assessments, statewide testing data, and other related student learning indicators and adjust practice when needed. We adopted this year a data-tracking program called [Performance Matters](#) designed to help us monitor multiple student data points on a real-time basis. We are administering to all students midyear MCAS-released common assessments in English, Mathematics, and Biology to track student learning progress in grades 9 and 10 in acquiring standards-based content and skills. Through these data practices, we are seeking external verification of student learning.

This is the second year of our District Data Team meeting to identify key data points that help us to monitor and intervene when we see any concerning student data trends. We have created an

Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) who work with the District Data Team to analyze data and identify students needing further support to be successful at ENSATS. The ILT will continue to meet throughout the remainder of the school year. In addition, our Professional Learning Action Team has met and begun long-range planning over a three-year period based on data trends and teacher needs. This team is content and cluster based.

In an effort to build capacity, we have several teachers working toward acquiring their administrator licenses. Two staff members completed the MAVA Leadership I program in November and two more staff members started the Leadership I program in January. We also have one teacher who is completing an administrative license through a CAGS program at Salem State University. These programs were funded through the Perkins grant and our tuition reimbursement.

Grant Funding to Date

Essex North Shore continues to be successful in acquiring competitive grant funding to support the District and offset budgetary demands. As a result, the District has received just over two million dollars (\$2,081,441) in competitive grant funding including a [\\$340,000 in a private donation](#) that directly supports eight CTE program areas and cameras for our buses.

Entitlement grants, in some cases, were on the rise with COVID relief funds increasing the overall totals. To date, the District has received \$2,271,129 in funds that will support academic learning gaps, special education services, CTE program areas, and new HVAC systems in Alumni and Gallant Halls respectively.

Competitive Awarded:

We were awarded the following competitive grants:

Massachusetts Life Sciences – Biotechnology - \$110,000

CTE Partnership Planning - \$15,000

CTI Start-up Retroactive - \$40,000

CTI Round 2 Grant - \$300,000

CTI Round 3 Grant - \$360,000

CTE Partnership Implementation - \$295,050

GE/NS Workforce Development Fund of the ECCF Advanced Manufacturing - \$138,320

Skills Capital Grant – Construction - \$121,000

Skills Capital Grant – Year Two-Advanced Manufacturing - \$536,796

Integrating Social and Emotional Learning into Academic Learning - \$10,000

After School and Out of School Time Quality Enhancement Summer 2021- \$28,000

After School and Out of School Time Quality Enhancement School Year - \$15,900

After School and Out of School Time Quality Enhancement Summer 2022 - \$29,100
Cummings Foundation - Year 3 - \$33,000
CVTE Equitable Access Round 1 - \$84,000
CVTE Equitable Access Round 2 - \$40,000
CVTE Student Support Impact and Recovery - \$50,500
F1rstJobs - \$24,742
Essex County Learning Community - \$12,500
USDA Farm to School - \$50,000
Summer Acceleration Academics - \$17,533
Laborers Local 22 - \$90,000

Entitlement Awarded:

Essex North Shore received the following entitlement grants:

Title I - \$159,486

Title IIA - \$29,626

Title IVA – \$11,257

Perkins - \$353,502

IDEA - \$409,735

American Rescue Plan: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - \$85,162

ESSER III - \$1,222,361

Focus on an Inclusive Learning Community

My third and final goal is to continue to work with the broader Essex North Shore learning **community** to promote the mission of our school community related to cultural proficiency and inclusive practices that reflect understanding of and respect for staff, students, and families' home languages, culture, and values.

Our next 5-Year Strategic planning process is underway this school year. We are completing our stakeholder feedback sessions by next week and will then meet with the 5-Year Strategic Planning Committee on January 25th to begin the process of crafting our next plan that will be presented to the District Committee for your review and approval in May.

We continue to offer our services and presence to our community partners. These include:

- Our carpentry students rebuilding the City of [Salem Gazebo Roof](#);
- Attending the [Catherine Larkin Memorial Dedication Ceremony](#) on Veterans Day in Salem to honor our distinguished alumnus, Lt. Catherine Larkin;
- Sending our carpentry and electrical students to work at the [Peabody Police Department](#);
- Running new electrical lines to the Town of Topsfield Gazebo;
- Updating electrical work at the Patton Homestead in Hamilton; and
- Electrical work at Lynch Park

- Numerous Chamber of Commerce events
- Eagle Scout ceremony for students who earned the prestigious rank
- We hosted the first ever [Chefs of the North Shore](#) competition

We are pleased to partner with [Brunt Workwear](#), a local affordable work wear company, after being connected through Bill Butts, who is a member of our Program Advisory Committee. Brunt is dedicated to making a social impact and has donated 280 work boots to date. We also look forward to starting a paid internship program.

We continue to engage our community partners by offering a training center for the Essex County Sheriff's Department and by offering North Shore Community College a lease to use CTE space for both their Cosmetology programs respectively. Under the direction of Bonnie Carr, our parking is full every evening and weekends with adult education students who take advantage of our workforce development programming.

Through an application process, I was selected to participate in the first [Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts](#) (AGC) externship in August. This weeklong intensive program provided insight in the commercial side of the construction industry. Making connections with business and industry is key. Through this internship, the District was able to build a relationship with the organization and local commercial contractors like Columbia Construction. We look forward to deepening our connections to broaden our instruction to the commercial side of the industry.

We have conducted several tours and lunch with elected officials. This fall, we hosted visitors from Beverly, Gloucester, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marblehead, Peabody, Rockport and Salem. Prior to this report, we visited 10 out of our 17 communities, including Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Lynnfield, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marblehead, Middleton, Peabody, Salem, and Swampscott to review our enrollment and offer our assistance in town/city projects.

We were pleased to bring back our ENSATS Retiree Luncheon this fall and the North Shore Superintendents Roundtable Holiday Luncheon in December. We also hosted in October the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth's Conference to Focus on Building Supportive Communities to Address Mental Health and Substance Abuse Amid Pandemic.

Other Updates

Safety and Security

The District added or upgraded the following to promote safety and security:

- We employed a third security officer to oversee parking lots and other areas of the building.
- We redesigned parking permits to include the lot assigned to the student, which creates a streamlined way to identify improper parking.
- We added several speed bumps along our roadways to decrease speed and increase safety for our drivers.
- We replaced the main lobby camera with a cloud-based, high-resolution product that is integrated through an app.
- We expanded key card access to two additional doors in Gallant Hall to increase ease of entry to staff members and increase security accountability.
- We hired a receptionist to allow entry into the building when appropriate and screen all guests using our LobbyGuard system.
- We have also ordered an electrical vehicle for use by our security staff to increase the number of rounds that can be completed and to aid in transporting students across campus when needed.

Prior to starting the school year, we met with the newly-appointed Danvers Chief of Police and Fire Chief to discuss safety operations of the school. We also conducted our first ALICE training and drill for the year with the aid of School Resource Officer Chase and the Danvers Police Department. The school crisis and emergency response team continues to meet biweekly to debrief events and plan future training and drills.

Technology Department

Our Technology Department implemented Performance Matters, an online test and data analytics platform that is compatible with Schoology, our Learning Management System. Data from Performance Matters will give us greater real-time access to student performance across multiple measures. In addition, we completed the transition to Zoom Phone, which included replacing over 300 phones across the campus.

Facilities, Farm, & Grounds Department

Our Facilities, Farm, & Grounds Department completed a number of projects during the summer to prepare for all students and staff to return to in-school learning, expansion efforts, and overall maintenance of existing buildings and our campus. Here is a list of expansion projects:

- **Smith Hall Renovation**

The work continued throughout the summer in preparation for our school reopening. The balcony was opened in Assembly Hall by Carpentry students and the finishing touches will be completed by February 2022. Assembly Hall received a fresh coat of paint, buffed hardwood flooring, new stage curtains and sound barriers, and room darkening shades. Stairwells also received new stair treads to increase safety and improve the aesthetic. The Coordinated Family and Community Engagement of the North Shore relocated from Gallant Hall to newly renovated space in the lower level of Smith Hall.
- **Gallant Hall**

Gallant Hall received critical infrastructure upgrades, including the recent installation of a Fire Alarm system. Additionally our Companion Animal Program relocated to two newly renovated classrooms that are closer to their training facilities and are shared with our partner, [Company 2 Heroes](#), a non-profit service dog training program for Veterans. The classroom upgrades included abating the asbestos flooring and replacing it with an epoxy resin, painting the walls, replacement of the ceiling grid and tiles, and installing LED lighting. The existing bathroom received plumbing and aesthetic upgrades and significant progress has been made on adding an additional bathroom to the building; including the rough-in plumbing, pouring of the foundation, framing, and roofing has just started.
- **Campus Paving Project**

Large sections of the campus received a newly-paved parking lot or roadway. The Smith Hall and Gallant Hall driveway was extended to allow for two-way traffic and additional parking spaces. The Manning Avenue parking lot was freshly paved as well as expanded to accommodate additional parking spaces for a number of our school buses and athletic spectators. The back road of our South Campus was also paved.
- **Alumni Gymnasium**

Over the summer, Alumni Gymnasium was emptied of items that were temporarily stored there during the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This massive undertaking was done in collaboration with student workers. With the gymnasium now open, it received a fresh coat of paint on the walls and ceiling and is now being utilized by several athletics programs such as Cheerleading, Boys Basketball and Wrestling. In addition, youth cheerleading also resumed their use of the space. We continue to renovate

the guest bathrooms and what were previously used as locker rooms to create usable space for the Drama Club.

- **Classroom Painting**
Over twenty classrooms and CTE program spaces in the main building received a fresh coat of paint including colors that are more soothing to the eye.
- **Dust Collection System**
The installation of a new Dust Collection System in the Carpentry program began in November and is scheduled to be completed by the end of January. This was a recommendation of the Program Advisory Committee in years past.
- **Transportation Mobile Office**
The Transportation Department was relocated to a mobile office suite. This dedicated space is situated in a location close to the bus unit parking lot. Previously, the buses were parked in a lot that is located near residential homes and complaints from neighbors were the norm.
- **Eatery at Essex**
The “Eatery at Essex” has been rebranded at the old bakery area in order to create a new welcoming space for staff. The Bistro will now be the location for all outside guests to eat or purchase items to go. We are sure this change will allow for our staff to fully utilize their lunch time in a cafe setting.
- **Cosmetology**
Over the summer, Cosmetology received a major upgrade to their space to ensure the space was up-to-date with industry standards and accommodate a larger class size. The redesign includes a new space for spa treatments and a better-utilized layout for underclassmen.
- **Media Center**
We were also pleased to modernize our Library/Media Center by replacing the carpet floors with a durable laminate, refresh the walls with new paint, and utilize donated furnishings throughout the space from our partner, The Furniture Trust.

- Larkin Cottage Update

There are two updates on the [Larkin Memorial Cottage Project](#). Since the beginning of the school year, we have done what work we can on the project. Our students are getting real-world experience in dealing with supply-chain delays that have limited our progress on this important work.

Recognitions and Representations

Our National Student Organizations (NSO), DECA, SkillsUSA, and FFA have started the school year with strong participation. We are pleased to share that we have two FFA State Officers, Emily Eberhardt - State President and Eva Scollo - State Vice President. Our FFA students represented the state at the MAVA Fall Membership meeting alongside the other state NSOs. Three of our graduates earned their American Degree: Kristen Kish, Andrea Morin, Brian Curley.

We announced last month that Essex Tech Senior, Beck Hermann, has been nominated as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in Career and Technical Education. Beck was nominated by DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley with finalists for the award invited to attend the annual breakfast hosted by the U.S. Department of Education and winners announced in April.

Essex North Shore was recently named a Distinguished School by the National Association of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) State Program Administrators. This recognition is given to 100 schools and highlights the work done by federally-funded schools in making significant improvements for students. Specifically, we were recognized for our work to support high need students.

We were pleased to begin bringing our student activities back to a sense of normality by attending live events locally, state-wide, and nationally, including the FFA National Convention, SkillsUSA State Leadership, and the DECA district competition.

I am also proud to represent ENSATS and the greater North Shore as a whole by serving on the following boards: MAVA, the North Shore Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Partnership for Youth, SkillsUSA, and MassHire.



Respectfully Submitted,

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