



Superintendent-Director Mid-Cycle Report January 12, 2023

Introduction

The purpose of this Mid-Cycle Report is to provide the Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District Committee with a mid-year update of progress made within the context of our [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) and the Superintendent [SMARTIE Goals](#) approved by the Committee October 2022. Our mission 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*.

The 2022-23 school year opened with a sense of hope for new beginnings and a return to the mission of preparing our students for the workforce. The summer months were filled with students and staff working together to prepare for the start of the school year of learning, including several building projects, an Integration Academy, CTAE Middle School Explore Camp, and union negotiations with two units. We held our opening professional development days with a focus on positivity using Jon Gordon's [Energy Bus](#) and hosting him as the keynote speaker where all staff were invited to listen to his message on power of positivity. We continue his work weekly at the Nest meetings and monthly at our faculty meetings.

Personal Growth and Development Statement

I believe that all educators regardless of position or years of experience need to continue to grow and develop. As a result, I am an active participant in professional learning activities. In July, Governor Baker appointed me to serve on the [Commonwealth Corporation](#) Board, an agency committed to ensuring that Massachusetts businesses have access to a pipeline of highly skilled workers and that youth and adults in Massachusetts have pathways to good jobs. I have participated in the annual MAVA Leadership Retreat, where I am the Vice President, and co-presented with an ENSATS Integration Team at the November M.A.S.S./M.A.S.C. Conference on "Integration Learning and Student Belonging." I am honored to serve as a [LEADS](#) fellow (Leadership Engaged and Activated to Drive System-wide Change), a Harvard Business School executive education program designed to improve gateway city prosperity through increased leadership capacity and connectivity with an emphasis on applied learning. In November, I was one of five recipients chosen to be [North Shore Chamber of Commerce](#) Distinguished Leaders. I am proud to represent ENSATS as a board member for the North Shore Chamber of Commerce, the [Massachusetts Partnership for Youth](#), [SkillsUSA](#), and [MassHire](#). In December, I joined the Museum of Science Future of Work for superintendents, where we met leaders in the life sciences and technology industries to discuss future workforce trends. Finally, I continue to contribute with the [MASS REDI](#) subcommittee engaging in equity discussions in education.

This report will focus on four key areas of our District: **Teaching and Learning, Family and**



Community Engagement, Facilities, Farm, & Grounds, and Fiscal Responsibility.

Teaching and Learning

With new programs, increased enrollment, and staff leaving due to retirement or new opportunities, the District interviewed and hired over forty educators for the 2022-2023 school year. This commitment to student learning and emotional well-being is paramount. As the District continues to seek ways to build leadership capacity, lead teachers for each content area were hired prior at the start of the school year, and most attended the annual [Summer Leadership Retreat](#) where we viewed and discussed the Educational Vital Signs survey results.

As a vocational school, our focus is to train the future workforce on the North Shore. This is done not only in our technical and agricultural programs, but also in courses that were strategically planned to engage students in learning presentation skills, communication skills, leadership skills, financial literacy, and civic engagement. Our Pathways courses are reviewed annually to determine the best approach and will be adjusted accordingly after a “deep dive” in the spring to be ready for the following school year.

We believe enrichment beyond the school day is equally important to a student’s high school career. This includes athletics, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, and our expanding Integration Academies where student leaders work alongside instructional staff to lessen the learning gaps for some students identified while they learn key mentoring and leadership skills simultaneously. The Summer 2022 Integration Academy began a new partnership with [Express Yourself](#), an arts immersion program for young people with mental and behavioral health issues, where students learn skills through art, dance, and music. Some students plan to perform with Express Yourself at the Wang Center in May 2023.

During the school day, to gather student voices, our Assistant Principal's meet weekly with representatives from each grade level to listen to ways to improve campus life at Essex Tech. The Nest is a student-led consultation group who recently celebrated their one-year anniversary. In addition, our Peer Mediation program started this fall. Currently, there are nine students who have been trained to serve as peer mediators. These students work with pairs or groups of students who need guided assistance to resolve conflict or work through an issue.

The District believes this work is important to forge positive relationships between instructional leaders and students. Other new programs include providing a dance elective class as a student option during Wellness classes and two Integration Pathways courses: Agricultural Sciences and English 11 along with STEAM Integration, pairing Algebra II with Physics. Recognizing the need to support students through social emotional learning, the school has also partnered with the [JED Foundation](#) over the next three years to develop strategies that focus on promoting emotional health and suicide prevention.



Recognizing the need to offer programs that have a strong workforce need, but also for those who have an interest in pursuing a future career, the District completed the first phase of the application process for Chapter 74 approval in Marketing and Early Education & Care. This approval process will involve additional phases that may impact budget appropriations. In July 2022, we received Early College designation from MA DESE which allows us to offer college credit courses during the school day for students. Students attend courses both at school and on the North Shore Community College campus. To date, 117 students have participated this school year, and we continue to support this programming.

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 members seeking to acquire new licenses as administrators. This includes two more teachers who will attend MAVA Leadership Academy beginning this month.

We continue to offer professional development in the following areas:

- Clerical and Support Staff
- OSHA training for Facilities, Farm, and Grounds staff
- Two Facilities, Farm, and Grounds staff members received training for Construction Supervisor License
- Transportation and Foodservice staff training

We offered our annual [Skillful Teacher](#) course for new teachers within their first three years through Research for Better Teaching. In addition, we held our annual Essex Tech Teacher Academy and New Teacher Orientation in August to support our newest teachers and those experienced teachers new to our district. Several teachers have also completed the OSHA train-the-trainer class.

We continue our work with our thought partner Michael Eatman and [Culture7.co](#) to plan and address areas of growth related to DEIB. This work will include the [EVS Survey Results](#) and how we move forward to create a positive school culture aligning to our 5-Year Strategic Plan and our mission statement.

Family and Community Engagement

We continue to offer a number of new and recurring family and community engagement efforts. We adopted a new [admission policy](#), which includes a lottery for Agricultural students applying this admission cycle for the 2023-24 school year. The new policy also includes the typical interview and scoring rubric that have been used in the past for all our in-district applicants.



In October, we celebrated our annual Homecoming Week that included multiple sporting events, our Pep Rally, and our first school Homecoming Dance since the pandemic. Homecoming Week also included a food drive for Gina's Giving Back in Peabody. We held our 8th-annual Hawk Holiday Hope community service learning project, which culminated in two school assemblies on December 9th to celebrate our whole-school holiday giving. Through this amazing project, we were able to purchase gifts for over 185 North Shore children-in-need who are in Department of Children and Families (DCF) custody or receiving DCF services. This is possible through the dedicated efforts of our staff and students as well as many additional donations from families, the Essex North Shore PTO, the Essex North Shore School Committee, and a number of local businesses.

On October 18, 2022, Lt Governor Karyn Polito visited for STEM week. The Lt. Governor toured Biotechnology, Companion Animal, Equine Science, Sustainable Horticulture, and the Veterinary Science programs. Angell at Essex was also included in the tour. As always, the Lt. Governor was most impressed by the opportunity to talk with our students.

On December 13, 2022 Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, Education Secretary Peyser, and the Governor's WorkForce Development Cabinet past and present were on campus to make their last Skills Capital Grant Announcement event. This event included a visit to the Larkin Cottage prior to the announcement. We received \$500,000 in grant funds for equipment to support the Natural & Environmental Sciences and Landscape & Turf Management programs.

At this time, there are 153 students working in [Cooperative Education](#) placements, representing 22 Career Technical and Agricultural programs. This number is scheduled to increase as juniors will become eligible for Cooperative Education in February.

Work continues on Larkin Cottage with the walls being framed, fireplace built and roof installation, including trusses being installed in late November. This fall, we have received several generous donations of both time and services. We would like to thank ABC Supply, Wood Trucking, the Carpenters Union Training Program, The Laborers Local 22, and the Essex Agricultural Society. This project is truly a community effort and we are amazed at the support we are receiving through the connections we are able to make.

There have been several community and student events this fall. These events include our first Family Ice Cream Social after our New Student Orientation, our New Caregiver Orientation, Meet the Teacher Night, the Credit for Life Fair, our Grade 11 Career Fair, Parent Safety presentation with Officer Chase and our annual Saturday Open house in two showings.

Finally, in December through the Massachusetts Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment



and in partnership with [The Institution for Savings](#), we hosted a Credit For Life Fair in our gymnasium to strengthen student personal financial literacy. This community-based fair was well attended and allowed our enthusiastic seniors an opportunity to connect with North Shore professionals who came to Essex Tech to share their wisdom about the skills necessary to navigate the complex world of personal finance.

Facilities, Farm & Grounds

Over the last few months our Facilities, Farm & Grounds (FF&G) crew have been active across our North and South campuses completing a number of Gallant Hall electrical and plumbing projects, creating a Health Assisting classroom, a cafeteria addition, and the gymnasium floor in Alumni Hall. Additionally, FF&G inspected the Manning Avenue lot expansion, the paving and sealcoating of North campus parking lots, along with power washing, painting, and technology projects. Below is a sampling of work completed as of January 2023.

Gallant Hall

- Bathroom expansion
- Additional of three bathrooms in lower level of Gallant Hall for electrical and plumbing
- Epoxy floor in Electrical program area
- Movement of upper level Electrical and Plumbing students to accommodate more students on Main Campus
- Installation of 10 new window systems
- Heating system pump repair/replacement

Smith Hall

- Health Assisting After Dark Program
- Smith Hall Cafe
- Grants Office new flooring

Alumni Gymnasium

- Replacement of Gymnasium floor
- Replacement of basketball hoops
- Installation of Big Fans
- Removal of aging wall divider
- Completion of Drama renovation

Overall Facility Maintenance

- Manning Ave Lot expansion and paving
- Sealcoating of the parking lots
- Power washing of exterior building
- Painting of classrooms, hallways, and bathrooms
- New VCT flooring in two office suites
- LED lighting in Animal Science lower level and livestock barn



- Counter replacement in Animal Science lower level
- Health Assisting reconfiguration
- Boiler project at Animal Science building
- Boiler at Farm Stand due to pest infestation
- New chicken coop and flock
- Replaced the rain water system pumps
- Renovation of room B204/206 to create larger learning space
- Installation of new Gas detection system in the HVAC shop
- Painting and branding of the concession stand, press box and team rooms
- New field signs installed
- [Angell Animal Clinic Expansion](#)
- [Equine Science Expansion](#) for Barn
- Site planning and design work for spring expansion project

Fiscal Responsibility

With the assistance of [entitlement and competitive grant funding](#), out-of-district tuition, and revenues, our District is in good financial standing. We hope to have our E&D funding approved by the Department of Revenue in the month of February. These funds will help support the continued efforts of bringing an upgraded HVAC system to the Alumni Gymnasium and other capital projects.

As the budget season is upon us, we meet regularly with the senior leadership team to address budget requests and make modifications to requests that will provide our sending communities with a budget that is appropriate; keeping in mind technical and agricultural education historically costs more than traditional high school education courses due to the nature of the programming offered.

Please find a full list of grant funding received as of January 13, 2023.

<u>Grant Name</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>Grant Start Date:</u>	<u>Grant End Date:</u>
Expanding High-Quality Instructional Math Materials Grant	\$30,000	7/1/2022	6/30/2023
Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness Continuation Grant	\$212,500	7/1/2022	6/30/2023
Skills Capital Grant - Electrical	\$242,000	7/1/2022	6/30/2023



Development & Expansion of High Quality Summer Learning	\$100,000	7/1/2022	8/31/2022
Perkins Program Improvement & Equipment Grant	\$64,220	7/1/2022	8/31/2022
FirstJobs	\$22,706	7/1/2022	8/26/2022
CTE Partnership Grant	\$250,000	7/1/2022	6/30/2023
Summer Acceleration Academies Grant	\$10,000	7/15/2022	9/2/2022
Equitable Access Grant	\$124,000	8/1/2022	8/31/2023
CTI Grant - Round 5	\$600,000	8/1/2022	6/30/2024
Title II	\$32,693	8/11/2022	6/30/2023
Title I	\$186,347	8/11/2022	6/30/2023
Title IV	\$11,414	8/11/2022	6/30/2023
Perkins Grant	\$389,229	8/25/2022	8/31/2023
GE Workforce Development Grant	\$142,100	8/31/2022	6/1/2023
IDEA	\$436,873	9/30/2022	6/30/2023
Early College Support	\$71,000	9/30/2022	6/30/2023
ASOST School Year	\$89,000	9/30/2022	6/30/2023
Integrating Social and Emotional Learning into Academic Learning	\$10,000	10/13/2022	8/31/2023
CTI Round 6	\$600,000	11/1/2022	10/31/2024
Financial Education Innovation Fund	\$2,500	11/23/2022	6/30/2023
CTE Partnership Implementation Grant Round 2	\$360,000	12/22/2022	6/30/2023
Skills Capital Grant - Groundskeeping & Environ. Science	\$499,999	1/2/2023	6/30/2023



Financial Literacy Planning & Implementation Grant	\$15,000	1/3/2023	6/30/2023
Genocide Education Grant	\$40,000	1/3/2023	6/30/2023
Math Acceleration Academies Grant	\$86,500	1/4/2023	6/30/2023
CTI Round 7	\$600,000	3/1/2023	2/25/2025
ASOST Summer 7/1/23-8/31/23	\$31,000	7/1/2023	8/31/2023
Skills Capital Grant - Animal Science & Culinary	\$1,725,000	10/26/2023	6/30/2024
School Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant	\$15,344		8/30/2023
Total	\$6,999,425		

Other Updates

Technology Department

In July, our Technology Department welcomed a new member of the department, Mr. Raymond Warner, who filled the vacant IT Systems Administrator position. The Technology Department started the school year by onboarding over 40 new employees, creating multiple accounts for each, providing them with a new computer, and training them on best practices at Essex Tech. In addition, we have upgraded over 40 instructor laptops this year, ensuring that long-time instructors have access to the best technology resources needed to perform their jobs. As of December, we upgraded 50 classroom projector systems to new and brighter laser projectors. In addition to replacing the projectors, we also installed a LightSpeed voice amplification system in these classrooms to ensure all learners have access to this assistive technology.

We embarked on a website redesign project in May 2022 with a local Beverly-based, certified women-owned business, Communications, Ink. In addition to giving the current website a more modern design, we also aim to build a site that represents our diverse student population, is easier to navigate, is more mobile friendly, brings more information to families and community members hoping to learn more about Essex Tech, and more. As of January, we are pleased to report that over 40 out of 85 pages of the new website have been created. We anticipate launching the new website within the next couple of months.



Safety and Security

Safety and Security are always paramount in education. To promote and further enhance security, the District has

- Switched visitor management systems to Verkada Guest. This new platform integrates directly with our camera system.
- Expanded key card access and door monitoring to three additional doors in the construction building to increase ease of entry to staff members and increase security accountability.
- Installed or upgraded over 15 security cameras across campus.
- Installed key card readers on elevators to prevent unauthorized student use.
- Installed a new video door intercom at the main entrance to better communicate with visitors prior to granting them access to the building and increase accountability. The new system is also directly integrated with our camera and key card system.
- Installed security cameras on school buses.

Prior to starting the school year, we met with the Danvers Chief of Police and Fire Chief to discuss the safety operations of the school. We also conducted our first Enhanced Lockdown 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, plan future training and drills, and review safety protocols and practices.

Union Negotiations

The District met over the summer several times with two units, HTF and AFSCME. As a result, the District was able to negotiate and settle a successor agreement with the AFSCME by December, 2022. It is with hope that we continue to negotiate with HTF and settle a contract that takes into consideration the work our HTF staff do while maintaining sound fiscal decisions for the future.

Looking Forward to 2023!

- **The Culture Action Team (CAT)** paused this fall to look at EVS and we are now ready to resume the CAT to focus on School Culture.
- **EVS Survey Results Review and Action Planning**
 - The Nest student led program
 - School Council
 - District Data Team
 - Lead Teachers
 - 5-Year Strategic Plan Implementation Team
- **Seek funding to support STEAM Academy on South Campus**
 - Move four programs into Gallant Hall seeking competitive grant funding and other alternative sources



Conclusion

To conclude, I am appreciative of the opportunities afforded to me as I seek my own personal and professional growth, develop and deepen relationships on the North Shore and lead a District that prepares the future generation of workers.

I would like to personally thank the District School Committee who support our work through a fiscally responsible budget with appropriate oversight. Furthermore, I thank each community member whether it be students, families, faculty, or staff. The work we do every day frames the future of our local economy. It is a team effort that is not done alone or by a handful of members. Every member of our school community makes it happen and I am grateful.

Respectfully Submitted,

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