



## Superintendent-Director End-of-Year Report June 12, 2024

### Introduction

The purpose of this End-of-Year Report is to provide the Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District Committee with a year-end update of progress made within the context of our [5-Year Strategic Plan](#) and the Superintendent [SMARTIE Goals](#) approved by the Committee in October 2023. This is a follow-up to the [Mid-Cycle Review](#) presented in January 2024. 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, agricultural, and academic excellence*.

During the second half of SY2024, the District provided professional learning opportunities related to difficult conversations. This work was done through the North Shore Mediation Center and this work will continue into SY2025. The Leadership team read and discussed *No-Drama Leadership*, reflecting on our collaborative efforts.

### Personal Growth and Development Statement

I am proud to represent ENSATS as a board member for the [North Shore Chamber of Commerce](#), [The Massachusetts Partnership for Youth](#), [SkillsUSA](#), [MassHire](#), and the [North Shore Children's Museum](#). As a member of The Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA), I am the current President of the organization and serve as the vocational representative on the [Commonwealth Corporation](#) board. This work is important as it provides insight into workforce trends and supports students along their educational and career pathways. I continue contributing to the [MASS REDI](#) subcommittee by engaging in equity and belonging discussions in education.

Throughout the school year, I attended and hosted several community events and expanded partnership opportunities with the District. One such event is a private foundation eager to assist expansion efforts related to career and technical education.

Principal Donnelly and myself are engaged in a professional learning opportunity through the [Trinity Foundation](#) which is funded by the [Essex County Racial and Equity and Learning Circle](#). This is a "is a learning experience designed to support individual and organizational racial equity practice as well as pathways towards more diverse, inclusive, and racially equitable organizations. Over the course of eight sessions, participating organizations will have the opportunity to go deeper into key racial equity concepts and content and apply this learning real time through the development and beginning implementation of action plans. Participants will come together, form a community, and deepen their identity as values-driven leaders. They will also learn principles of building a restorative culture, skills for trauma-inclusion, and facilitation



skills to create more racially equitable organizations.” (ECCF.org)

I continue to be an adjunct professor at Fitchburg State University. This allows me to stay active in new pedagogical advances as it relates to career and technical education.

This report will focus on the following three key areas of our District:

- Teaching, Learning, and Belonging
- Partnerships, Workforce and Regional Development
- Fiscal Responsibility

### Teaching, Learning, and Belonging Highlights

- **Early College & Dual Enrollment** - Students have earned over 720 college credits through the NSCC Early College Designation Program and Dual Enrollment and 42 students from the Class of 2024 graduated as Early College Program completers. Two Culinary Arts students also completed their first year of college at Johnson & Wales University while concurrently graduating from Essex Tech on May 30, 2024, each earning 32 college credits during their Senior year.
- **Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy** - This school year marked the first year of presenting students with the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy with ten students earning the seal and two with distinction. Medals were made in the Advanced Manufacturing Program.
- **Deeper Learning Implementation Grant** - 50 teachers selected units, planned lessons, and looked at student work from January to June 2024 through the lens of extending deeper learning to our students.
- **Creative Movement Integration Academy** - Beginning in January through May 2024, Essex Tech students worked with an artist at Express Yourself (EXYO) to create dance movements that were showcased at the Wang Center in May alongside this year’s special guest appearance of Blue Man Group.
- **Winter Integration Academy** - Over February vacation, our students worked with our community partner, [Real Pirates Museum Salem](#), using mathematical problem-solving, physics, and engineering concepts to calculate a location where the gold from The Whydah Galley, which sank in 1717, has yet to be located off the coast of Cape Cod.
- **Spring Integration Academy** - Over April vacation, our students applied the principles of mathematical concepts to create a pollinator garden on our South Campus.
- **Culture Fair** - On April 23rd, we celebrated our second annual Culture Fair, facilitated by Mr. Stacey and student members of U-ACT. Over 50 students shared art, dance, food, information, and traditional dress from around the world with their peers.
- **Genocide Studies Exhibition** - In April 2024, the students in our Genocide Studies classes, presented their annual Genocide Studies Exhibition, where students displayed their year-long genocide research projects. This was the largest ever, hosted at Alumni Memorial Building and open to the public in the evening.



- **Mental Health Awareness & Resources** - Essex Tech increased our communities' access to Mental Health resources throughout the school year. New initiatives included student and family presentations by suicide attempt survivor [Emma Benoit](#) and local youth who spoke candidly about their journeys through their mental health related challenges. The District also fostered new partnerships with the [NAN Project](#), [Mental Makeover](#), and the [Dirty Hands Project](#) to increase students', families' and staff's access to mental health services and programming. Our [Give-Guide-Get](#) campaign was launched and promoted throughout [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) this May as well.
- **Natural & Environmental Science Senior Exposition** - On May 14, 2024 the NES students presented their senior research project to their peers, families, and teachers. This was held at the Alumni Memorial Building.
- **Certifications** - CTAE programs hold several credentials upon graduating. This includes trade certificates, licenses, and hours toward apprenticeship.
- **OSHA** - 443 Sophomore students received their OSHA 10 certification. 245 of those students received in person training from the instructors or administration. 198 received training through CareerSafe on-line.
- **Cooperative Education** - We posted our highest numbers to date: [April 2024 Co-op Monthly Report](#).
- **SkillsUSA National Leadership Conference** - Two Essex Tech SkillsUSA students are traveling to Atlanta for the national competition in June 2024. Jonas Beaver will compete, and Akram Mchiti will represent SkillsUSA as a state officer.
- **FFA Convention and Expo** - Several Essex Tech students competed at the state level and will travel to Nationals in Indianapolis in October 2024.
- **Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)** - Our Essex Tech DECA chapter completed its fifth year, and this school year we had a team of over 80 attend the district competition in December. This year, 40 students advanced to the state competition in Boston and three of our members qualified for the international competition.
- **Appreciation Days and Weeks** - We celebrated Administrative Assistant Appreciation Day, Bus Driver Appreciation Day, Assistant Principal's Day, Principal's Day, School Nurse's Day, and Teacher Appreciation Week during spring 2024.
- **National Honor Society / National Technical Honor Society**
- **Sophomore Semi-Formal Dance** - We held our first-ever Sophomore Semi Formal dance on Friday, May 3, 2024, in the high school Gymnasium.
- **Junior Prom** - Our first Junior Prom was held on March 1, 2024, at the Danversport Yacht Club.
- **National Signing Day** - We held our first signing day for those directly entering the workforce. It was a great success!
- **Pinning Ceremonies** - We held three pinning ceremonies for our [Dental Assisting](#), [Health Assisting](#), and [Veterinary Science](#) students. These students were awarded pins in recognition of their hard work and completion of a state credential.



- **Senior Awards Ceremony** - On May 16, 2024, we held our annual Senior Award Ceremony with 135 total awards presented to various students. The awards included memorial scholarships, academic achievements, CTAE achievements, and leadership awards. There were several new awards presented, including the Heming Scholarship where four students received \$2,500 toward their post-secondary education.
- **Senior Recognition** - This year, we presented several new honors including recognizing the top 5% of the class with a family dinner, top 10% with embroidered stoles, and several additional cords.
- **Senior Prom** - On May 28, 2024, we held our Senior Prom at the Danversport Yacht Club. Family members and friends had the opportunity to see and photograph their senior promenade in the Main Gymnasium prior to boarding a bus to the Club. Approximately 510 students participated in the Prom this year and it was a beautiful evening on the water!
- **Graduation** - On May 30, 2024, we held our 10th-annual graduation ceremony with 387 members of the Class of 2024 receiving their diplomas. Dr. Thomas O'Toole delivered our keynote address and offered his 5 pearls of wisdom. Our Valedictorian, Mia Gauron; Salutatorian, Ely Wallen; our MAVA Outstanding Vocational Technical Student, Rohan Plante; and the Class of 2024 President, Chloe Coffey, all delivered exceptional speeches to their classmates, families, and friends. The successful graduation ceremony was truly the result of a team effort between the administrative team, the Facilities, Farm, & Grounds crew, the clerical team, our senior class advisors, and our students who helped set up despite the rain.
- We will hold our Skillful Teacher course for new teachers in August alongside our friends in education at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School.
- **Admissions** - The District has accepted 500 students for the Class of 2028. We continue to review data internally and through the subcommittee meetings. At this time, we have increased our Multilingual Language (ML) population from 18 students to 31 students for SY25. You can find the Admissions Dashboard here. We will continue to accept applicants from the waitlist as seats become available.
- **Piloting New Evaluation Tool** - We were proud to pilot DESE's new evaluation tool during the 2023-2024 school year, using both the Classroom Teacher Rubric for Educator Evaluation and the School Level Administrator Rubric (June 2023).
- **Faculty Council** - In our ongoing efforts to maintain a strong working relationship with the Hathorne Teachers' Foundation, a new Faculty Council has been established recently. This council regularly brings together administration and faculty members to discuss potential challenges and collaboratively develop solutions.

### **Performing Arts**

We continue to increase the number of ways to bring the performing arts to life at Essex Tech with our 2nd-annual Talent Show on April 26, 2024. This event, coordinated by our Dance



Teacher, Ms. Cocco, and the Essex Stars Dance Team, was a great success. Over 20 students and several staff members participated in the show, and the audience seats were full of supportive students, staff, and family members during both performances.

### **Drama Club: Radium Girls Musical Alumni Memorial Building**

The Drama Club held its spring drama performance the weekend of May 10, 2024. It was a great success!

### **Athletics**

We completed our first year in the Cape Ann League for athletics. This was a growing year for our teams with tougher competition, but we had the most student-athletes to date. This [Athletics Report](#) will provide some detailed information.

### **Kindness Week**

Thanks to School Resource Officer Michael Chase and his special presentation to kick off Kindness Week 2024! Many CTAE teachers worked with their students to offer a variety of community service projects, including campus cleanups, visits to elementary schools for lessons, collection drives, and more.

### **Auto Expo**

The Annual Auto Expo was held on May 18, 2024. Cars filled the main parking lot and ages ranged widely as the love for cars united them.

### **PTO Connection**

There are two members of the administrative team that attend the monthly PTO meetings to increase the lines of communication.

### **Partnerships, Workforce and Regional Development**

#### **NightHawks Adult Education**

Our NightHawks Adult Education enrollment and course development continue to increase. SY24 courses include industry training and credentialing sessions in collaboration with MassHire and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, aligned with the Career Technical Institute (CTI) Initiative. These sessions include Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Construction Craft Laborer, Culinary Arts Electro-Mechanical Assembly, HVAC in partnership with MA Clean Energy, Plumbing Tier 1, and Welding in partnership with the Local 7 IronWorkers Union. In the summer of 2024 we will continue our BioLab Technician Training Program and a new OffShore Wind/Renewable Energy Training Program. All of our CTI Programs require prerequisite courses, including Professional Skills, Career Readiness Skills, Diversity and Equity in the Workplace, as well as multiple employer meet and greets, tours, and job placement opportunities. In



partnership with the GE Foundation and the Advanced Manufacturing Training and Expansion Program (AMTEP), our Advanced Manufacturing course has been expanded to two 415-hour sessions annually. We participate in Northeast Regional Economic Development Planning Sessions, MassTech Collaborative, and MassBioEd to address workforce needs within our region. We continue to offer a Healthcare Training Program in collaboration with the North Shore Community Action Program.

These organizations work with ENSATS to extend our commitment to adult training with direct placement into the workforce. These efforts are funded through multiple grant opportunities that have been secured for SY24, including GE Foundation Cycle 6 & 7 - \$239,100, CTI Round 5, 6, and 7 - \$1.8M. Round 8 - \$1M and Round 9 - \$2M. We continue to offer courses for the licensed trades of Electrical through our Journeyman Program and Plumbing through our Tier Program. In addition to the workforce based programs, we have and will continue to host community events including an Autumn Pumpkinfest, Thanksgiving Centerpiece Creations, Winter Holiday Cookie Decorating for Children in partnership with Rock the Spectrum and Italian Cooking Classes.

Several community events occurred throughout the school year including multiple events with the [Essex County Community Foundation](#) (ECCF). This is a non-profit organization that coordinates grants for other non-profit organizations.

### **Larkin Gala**

On May 18, 2024, we held our Annual Larkin Gala Fundraiser under the tent on The Lawn of Smith Hall. During the event, we presented the Larkin Lifetime Achievement award to Anthony “Uncle Tony” Corrao for his exceptional contributions to his community and his remarkable career in the local construction industry.

### **Larkin Project**

Significant progress has been made on the Larkin Cottage. The rough electrical, HVAC/mechanical and plumbing work has been completed. We were fortunate to receive assistance with the mechanical work from T & T Mechanical and consulted with Nardone Electric on the scope of the electrical work. The next phase will be to install the sprinkler system, insulation and drywall.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

The District received budget approval from 12 communities as of June 6, 2024. It is anticipated that this number will increase as cities complete their budget process. [Budget Approval Log](#)

There are several projects happening on campus that have required grant funding, bond... This includes the HVAC project at Alumni Memorial Building, windows and front facade at Gallant Hall,



Please find a full list of [competitive grant funding](#) received as of June 10, 2024.

Entitlement Grants	
Name of Grant	Amount
Perkins	\$366,265
Title IV	\$13,675
Title II	\$31,547
IDEA	\$472,644
Title I	\$182,633
IDEA Part B Grant	\$17,751
Perkins Equipment and Program Improvement	\$77,830
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,162,345</b>

Competitive Grants	
Name of Grant	Amount
Dev. & Expansion of High Quality Summer Learning Continuation	\$100,000
Student Opportunity Act Evidence-Based Practice Continuation	\$145,000
Summer Acceleration Academies	\$71,750
Early College - FY 25 Summer Allocation	\$30,000
Food Security Infrastructure - Orchard Well	\$73,450
FirstJobs - Summer Grant	\$68,146



CTE Partnership Implementation	\$332,000
Early College SY24 Continuation - School Year	\$63,500
CTI Comm Corp - Round 8	\$1,000,000
Approaches to Address Student Cell Phone Use	\$25,000
SEL & Mental Health Continuation Grant	\$133,000
FirstJobs - School Year	\$5,035
After School & Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Continuation	\$120,000
After School & Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Continuation - Summer 2023	\$31,000
Safe & Supportive Schools Continuation	\$10,000
Deeper Learning Implementation	\$100,000
Financial Literacy Innovation Grant	\$3,200
Integrating Social & Emotional Learning into Academic Learning	\$10,000
Mathematics Acceleration Grant	\$100,000
MA FRESH	\$50,000
Genocide	\$15,000
Department of Industrial Accidents - Safety Grant	\$4,375
SEL and Mental Health Grant - increased allocation	\$14,375
Economic Development Initiative - Community Project Funding Grant	\$850,000





Skills Capital Grant - HVACR & Biotechnology	\$350,000
Career Technical Initiative Round 9	\$2,000,000
MA CEC Offshore Wind/Renewable Energy Training Grant	\$65,980
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,847,291</b>

<b>Private Grants</b>	
Anonymous Funder	\$750,000
Cummings Foundation (\$50K - 3 Years)	\$150,000
GE/ AMTEP Adv. Manufacturing Training Program	\$44,300
GE/ AMTEP Cycle 8	\$30,000
GE/ AMTEP CY2024	\$273,000
Propane Education Council-Technical School Grant	\$10,000
LRIG - NE/Marsha Paul Education Grant	\$2,527
LEADS	\$5,000
ECCF/Christina Frei Fund	\$30,000
Cell Signaling Tech - Education in Science	\$1,147
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,295,974</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$8,305,610</b>
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Pending Grants	
MA Skills Capital Technology and Equipment Grant-Automotive Technology and Metal Fabrication	\$600,000
MA Skills Capital Modernization Grant - Biotechnology and Engineering/ Automation/Robotics	\$2,000,000
Summer Acceleration Academies	\$100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,750,000</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$11,055,610 if pending grants are received</b>
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**Other Updates**

**Human Resources (“HR”) Department**

Since January, the HR Department has been working strategically to prepare for end of year activities, along with succession planning for the 24/25 school year. More specifically, since January, the HR Department has extended offers to and onboarded more than 12 staff members. Recognizing retirements and resignations ahead, the Department has already filled five positions.

Other notable accomplishments since January have included:

1. Timeclock system procurement and initial configuration, replacing archaic paper timesheet review, submission and approval workflows, District wide.
2. Solicited bids for and implemented a new dental insurance for all District staff, resulting in a nearly 20% reduction in premiums.
3. Ongoing HTF and AFSCME labor relations management. (Contract administration)
4. Performance management through corrective action and mentorship.
5. Maintaining single digit vacancy rates.

The Department looks forward to working over the summer to update job descriptions, ensure vacant positions are filled and working vigorously to ensure staff needs are addressed in a successful manner.

**Technology Department**



Since January, the Technology Department has begun, continued, and completed many projects to enhance district operations and teaching and learning. In April and May, all staff Google accounts were enrolled in Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to strengthen our cybersecurity posture significantly.

Technology infrastructure across the campus also saw significant improvements. This includes completing the network expansion in several farmstand buildings, such as the far greenhouse and riding arena. We have also begun the network expansion up to the Manning Ave parking lot; when complete, this expansion will support Wi-Fi connectivity, security camera visibility, and the control of an entry gate.

In accordance with our upgrade schedule, there were a number of regular device upgrades, including computer replacements for various staff and faculty members, printer replacements, and other miscellaneous equipment. Over the February break, we upgraded the audio/visual system in A/B Dining to simplify overall operations of the space and provide a better end-user experience.

The technology department also welcomed a new team member, Joanna McKay, as our new Registrar/Student Records Facilitator. Joanna replaced Kathy Kindler, who retired in December after many years of service to the district. Ms. McKay has brought new ideas and implemented many new efficiencies in this role.

In addition, the technology department rebooted its intern program with the Information Technology Services CTAE Program. We now host two interns, a junior student and a senior student. The intern program provides hands-on learning opportunities to these students.

## **Safety and Security**

We were pleased to complete our first-ever enhanced lockdown drill during a transition time in April. Practicing an enhanced lockdown during passing time is crucially important as data shows that the vast majority of school active shooter events occur during unstructured time. These drills are part of our ongoing focus on emergency preparedness and part of our commitment to keeping our school community safe.

Since January, we have added several security cameras around the campus as part of our ongoing focus on campus security & safety. We also added an additional door intercom system to the Angell at Essex Clinic, allowing the clinic staff to screen guests outside before granting them access to the building.



The next set of cameras will be installed at the Larkin Cottage.

### **Facilities, Farm & Grounds**

The FFG department continues to develop the school through on-campus projects. Projects for the school year can be found [HERE](#).

### **Union Negotiations**

The District settled AFSCME bus unit negotiations in three meetings. This was great for both the unit and the District. We appreciate the negotiating team that made this happen.

### **Looking Forward to 2025!**

As we head into 2025, we will continue to focus on school culture, learning gaps for students, equity and belonging, mental health and expanding access to high quality technical and agricultural education.

### **Conclusion**

This report is a collection of highlights since January 2024. We are fortunate to have committed staff, engaged students, and supportive families that come together toward one purpose, workforce development. We are confident that when our students leave us, they are prepared for skilled labor and high-demand occupations.

I would like to personally thank the school committee, administrative team, faculty, staff, and the entire ENSATSD community who continue to support the work we are doing to live our mission of technical, agricultural, and academic excellence. I would also like to thank my husband, Chris Riccio, who gives me the opportunity to serve Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School!

Respectfully Submitted,

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