

## **Superintendent's Annual Report January 15, 2009**

Annually, the Superintendent, with the assistance of her administrative team, shall:

- 1) evaluate student performance, which shall include, but not be limited to, student performance or standardized tests such as performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), completion of the curriculum, attendance, and dropout rates;
- 2) review the curriculum and instructional services, and
- 3) report to the school board on findings as to student performance and recommendations, if any, for curriculum or instructional changes as a result of the evaluation of student performance.

In October we accepted the 2008 School Report Card, but had little time to discuss it. Tonight, with our special guests in attendance, it is a good time to review the Report Card, highlight our programs, share the successes and challenges, and discuss ways we can work together.

Each of you has a copy of the 2008 district report card. You will see that in 2008 we had 2,118 students – 997 at ERES, 438 at ERMS and 683 at ERHS. Our low-income rate was 42.8% with a rate of 53.5% at the elementary, 42.5% at the middle school, and 27.4% at the high school. The high school dropout rate was 1.3%. Our mobility rate for the district was 14.5%. The attendance rate was 94.5%.

Parental contact was 86.3%. The pupil-teacher ratios at all levels are below state averages, while the pupil-administrator ratio is

higher than state average. The average class size is usually at state average except at the middle school. We have more time devoted to mathematics at the 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade level than the state average, but fewer minutes in English/Language Arts. You will note the significant time devoted to English/Language Arts at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level.

We had 138 teachers with a high percentage of female teachers. 61.9% of the teachers have a bachelor's degree and 38.1% have a master's degree. All teachers are highly qualified.

The School District Financial section shows the average teacher's salary is below state average as is the average administrator's salary. In 2006-2007 we exceeded the state average for expenses in instruction, general administration (note that we had our Math/Science grant and these administrative cost are reflected here), and supporting services. We had fewer other expenditures. Our budget is approximately \$17.6M with about 42% local funds, 35.5% general state aide, 11.8% other state funding and 9.6% federal funding.

The 2005 Equalized Assessed Valuation per pupil was \$78,088 with a tax rate of \$4.05. Our 2006-2007 Instructional Expenditure per pupil was \$4,435 and our Operating Expenditure was \$8,037 per pupil.

The ACT composite score was 20.0. The graduation rate was 98.0% with 97.4% males, 98.6% females, 92.9% students with disabilities, and 93.8% economically disadvantaged.

Overall performance shows the district above the state average on all State tests. The Report Card continues at each grade level to provide us information for each sub-group. Administrators and teachers have analyzed this information for their individual school improvement plan. The district did make Annual Yearly Progress

(AYP); however, the high school scored higher than the state average for Mathematics, but did not make the 62.5% for mathematics. Obviously, we join many high schools in not making AYP at the high school level; however, our high school is vigorously addressing this issue.

When I started seven years ago, one of our first goals was to balance the budget. We've done that now for the past five years! And, the best part is, that we have increased opportunities for students while balancing the budget ~

Examples include:

- Additional sections of kindergarten, first, and third grade
- A full-time vocal instructor at the 6-12 level
- Support help at the elementary, middle, and high school
- Technology in the K-12 classrooms
- Three Read 180 classrooms
- A part-time Latin instructor
- A Dean of Students
- Additional counseling services at ERES
- Math and enrichment coaches and classes
- And now the middle school construction project!

In addition, during these past seven years we have increased salaries and benefits for our employees. We continue to strive to stay competitive so that we can attract and retain the brightest and best employees.

While operating a balanced budget has been and is important ~ we are more concerned about student performance and learning!

We are doing better academically than research, statistics, or our own projections would expect us to do, based on our poverty count.

- ERES has been recognized as a “Spotlight School”, earned the International Reading Award and the State Academic Excellence Award
- ERMS has been recognized with an “Academic Improvement Award
- ERHS has been recognized as one of “75 Promising Schools in the Nation!”

There are many reasons for our success. Let me highlight three of those reasons.

### 1. We have Excellent Instruction

We have highly competent, skilled, and talented teachers who work relentlessly in providing quality instruction to each and every child/each and every day. This is HARD work and yet the teachers in our district often make teaching look easy. That is a compliment to their knowledge and skill of the Science and Art of Teaching.

Four of our teachers have received National Board Certification. Just this past week we learned that an ERES teacher was named the “Illinois Reading Teacher of the Year”. Our Ag Instructor was President of the State Agriculture Teachers Association.

### 2. We have Wonderful Opportunities

ERCU#1 graduates and parents commented that one of the best things about the district is the number of opportunities available. They appreciate all of the classes the high school

offers, the dual credit, the athletic programs, the extra-curricular opportunities.

As No Child Left Behind has stressed reading and mathematics, we have certainly focused much energy into those areas. However, we have increased hands-on opportunities for our K-12 students. Our fine arts, career and technical offerings, Jobs for Illinois graduates, Special Education programs, JROTC, provide opportunities.

~We have provided transportation for the band to perform at Disney World; science students to go to Huntsville, Alabama; field trips for K-12; FFA students to go to State and National Conventions.

~Our students have service opportunities such as the one we approved last month where our Technical and Industrial class will once again go to New Orleans to help build homes.

Our students are also doing more service projects within Richland County. They tutor, mentor, honor veterans, visit nursing homes.

~While our funding from the Math/Science Grant has ended, the grant was instrumental in helping us with dollars so that our kids could explore the forest, the prairie and the river. Seventh and eighth graders have Palm Pilots to use. The eighth graders have taken airplane rides. Students and teachers were provided with technology and equipment through this grant that will be instrumental in the classroom for years to come. That grant total over four years was over \$1M dollars.

We are in the process now of looking for new funding sources to provide our students unique and exciting educational opportunities.

~We have had Tiger Grants that the Board, along with ERFAE, has provided for technology in the classroom.

~We have also received funding from the Carrie Winters and Johnsie Fiock Fildes Foundations to help with our Wellness Program, our After School Program and our CHAT Program.

~The fact that our elementary is an ASPIRE Demonstration Site has provided opportunities for struggling learners and our teachers. Visitors are coming to visit our teachers and classrooms. They are impressed! I am too – our teachers have done this so routinely that they forget that, indeed, they are special professionals.

~Read 180 – At a meeting last year you heard the overview of our Read 180 program and you heard from parents whose students are growing in reading skills and confidence. We have added an additional teacher and this program continues to Wow us! What an opportunity!

~The Truant Alternative Program has been refunded and is helping kids connect to school. That along with CHAT, (Classroom Harmony Achieved Today), the parenting programs, the grandparent support group, and the focus on developing positive relationships continues to benefit our students.

~The Successful Practice Network - I remind you again that this is a big deal! We were chosen – this is a Bill and Melinda Gates Grant with the International Center for

Leadership and the Council of State School Officers. It is a five-year initiative and we are in our fourth year. We continue to receive technical assistance and resources related to best practices. The purpose is to transform our promising school into a proven model for success.

Our students, teachers, and administrators have had new opportunities because of this exciting initiative. We've been to Washington D.C. and Orlando, Florida to learn, share, and learn some more. I have been part of the Educational Leadership Institute, which is a group of 100 educators throughout the country. These networking and learning opportunities are vital for our district.

From this initiative we have developed programs at all schools. Examples include:

~the Leadership program at ERES with Stephen Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People."

~The emphasis at ERMS on Russell Quaglia's 8 Conditions for Learning.

~The 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and  
12<sup>th</sup> grade transition programs

~The Advisor/Advisee program entitled Tiger PAWS (Personal Achievement with Success) program where ERHS students meet twice a month in groups of 12-15 students with a faculty member to discuss topics pertinent to being successful in high school and beyond.

This initiative with the International Center has helped us focus on a rigorous curriculum that is relevant to students with positive relationships among students and staff.

Our high school has always been accredited by the North Central Association. Now, North Central has joined the Southern Association and the National Study of School Evaluation to form one unified organization called AdvancED.

Currently, we are one of five districts in Illinois invited to pursue District Accreditation. As stated by the AdvancED staff, they feel that our district is an initiator versus an imitator. This is an honor for all of us!

### 3. We have Fantastic People

The key to success at ERCU#1 is our people!

- We have great kids! These kids are the best. They come from all kinds of different homes and families and bring varied talents. They challenge us, they frustrate us, they amaze us and they delight us! They represent our best hope for this community and this country.
- We have a great staff! Everywhere I go people compliment our staff. Whether it is professional or support staff – they are just great!

They are often the first greeting in the morning and the last smile in the evening. They serve our community, parents, and students and they do it with style and grace.

- We have a great administrative team! – Our district is recognized by others as having a strong administrative team. As I have been to workshops, conferences, and done consulting work, I realize how fortunate we are. They listen, learn, and lead! Our students, staff, and faculty benefit every day from their leadership!
- We have a great Board of Education and Community - It all comes full circle to a Board of Education and Community that cares about education. You set that vision, value, and expectation.

So, we thank you – we need you – we need your expertise and experiences to help open new thoughts and ideas to us and our rural community. We need your help in thriving during economic downturns. We need your help as we ask more of our students, our staff, and our community.

We have 150 first grade students. They are 6 or 7 years of age and they will graduate in 2020. Our challenge is to continue with 2020 vision for ERCU#1.

So, very simply – we are about ...

Student Achievement – students actively engaged in learning

Professional learning – all of us learning together

Relationships – positive relationships with students/parents/families/the community and each other

Fun – having a wonderful time doing what we love to do!

We appreciate your support in the past and we truly need your help and support in the future!

Congratulations to our students, staff, faculty, administrators, board members, and community. We are proud of your achievements and are excited about the opportunities for 2009!