

Superintendent's Annual Report January 21, 2010

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 2009 School Report Card, but had little time to discuss it. Tonight I will review the Report Card, share reflections from this last decade, and then highlight our challenges and opportunities for the new year and decade.

- I. Each of you has a copy of the 2009 district report card. You will see that in 2009 we had 2,087 students – 1011 at ERES, 438 at ERMS and 638 at ERHS. Our low-income rate was 45.9% with a rate of 53.7% at the elementary, 44.5% at the middle school, and 34.5% at the high school. The high school dropout rate was .6%. Our mobility rate for the district was 12.6%. The attendance rate was 94.5%.

Parental contact was 87.4%: 98.9% at ERES; 99% at ERMS and 63% at ERHS. The high school already has a plan to improve that number! 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 with exceptions. We have more time devoted to mathematics at the 3rd 6th & 8th grade level than the state average, but fewer minutes in English/Language Arts at the 6th and 8th grade level.

We had 143 teachers with a high percentage of female teachers. 59.5% of the teachers have a bachelor's degree and 40.5% 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 2007-2008 we exceeded the state average for expenses in instruction, general administration, and supporting services. We had fewer other expenditures. Our budget is approximately \$17.9M with about 42.8% local funds, 37.4% general state aide, 10.9% other state funding and 8.9% federal funding.

The 2006 Equalized Assessed Valuation per pupil was \$78,756 with a tax rate of \$4.09. Our 2007-2008 Instructional Expenditure per pupil was \$4,565 and our Operating Expenditure was \$8,398 per pupil.

The ACT composite score was 20.1. The graduation rate was 91.1% with 93.8% males, 88.3% females, 100% students with disabilities, and 93.5% economically disadvantaged.

The next two pages are a report of state scores on state assessments on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

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 middle school and high school did not make AYP. The middle school did not reach the reading target with one subgroup. The high school scored higher than state average, but did not reach the 70% with reading and mathematics.

Briefly AYP is determined by several factors:

- All students and subgroups of 45 or more students must meet targets
- For ERCU#1 we have subgroups of gender, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged.
- 95% of all students and subgroups must be tested for reading and mathematics
- Meet the minimum target for attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or graduation rate for high school

In 2009 the target for elementary and middle schools was 90%. For 2010, 2011, and 2012 the target is 91% and in 2013 and 2014 the target is 92%.

For high school the 2009 target was 78%. For 2010 it is 80%, 2011 – 82%, 2012 – 84% and 2013 and 2014 the target is 85%. (Please note all schools exceed the 2014 targets)

And then we must:

- Meet the minimum annual target for meeting/exceeding for all students and subgroups.

The 2009 target for students to meet and/or exceed was 70%. In 2010 the target will be 77.5%, then 2011 – 85%, 2012 and 2013 – 92.5% and in 2014 the target is 100%.

So, what this means is that we are aligning our curriculum, providing excellent instruction, have support services in place, working hard and harder and yet our target moves.

I firmly believe ~

That all children can learn

That all schools/districts must be held accountable

That a majority of the No Child Left Behind legislation has been helpful to students and schools.

In addition, though, I believe that perhaps all students do not learn at the same rate and time. That perhaps one assessment does not accurately measure a students learning.

So, I applaud our schools and district for indeed we remember the importance of creativity, imagination, good character, leadership, and the entire student.

II. Reflections of the Decade

ERCU#1 has a rich history of excellence. The community has always valued education and their children. From consolidation of rural one-room schools to state-of-the-art facilities today, the community has voted and paid for improvements for their children. The decade began with moving into a brand new elementary facility that houses over 1000 PreK-5 students. In 2002 we remodeled the 1950 high school and we ended the decade by completely renovating our middle school. What an accomplishment!!

During this decade the district and our faculty and staff have won numerous awards. We have:

- Nationally Board Certified staff members
- The Illinois Reading Teacher of the Year
- The President of the State Agriculture Teachers Association
- Have faculty/staff who have been recognized statewide by the State Board “Those Who Excel” Award Program
- Our prior Board President was recognized by IASB statewide with the Thomas L. Burroughs Award for the Most Outstanding Board President
- Administrators have been honored by IPA awards, Eastern Illinois University awards, and local awards
- Our schools have won awards such as the International Reading Award, Spotlight School, and Academic Improvement Award. Our high school was chosen as one of five in the state and one of seventy-five in the country to be part of the Bill and Melinda Gates Grant with the International Center for Leadership and Excellence. We are a Covey leadership school and more than half of all staff members are trained on the “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.” The best part is that our K-6th grade students know the habits the best!
- The district received a Department of Education grant for Math and Science and was able to provide professional development in math, science, engineering, and technology for teachers in our district and the surrounding area. The grant benefited students as teachers did action research projects and implemented learning projects in their classrooms. The

opportunities for our rural district were fantastic as we saw teachers and students grow! One of the best outcomes was that the high school students who helped in the program all majored in engineering at major Universities.

- We have a truant alternative grant to help with our dropout rate. We wrote that grant eight years ago because the male dropout rate was 57.5%. How pleased we are this last year to report that the high school dropout rate was .6%! In addition, we received grants to promote a positive school climate, grants for wellness to assist staff and students in health prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles, two Homeless Grants to serve “Families in Transition” and just this past year we have received a 21st Century learning grant to start an after school program for 6th through 8th graders.
- We have been fortunate in funding from local foundations. ERFAE has been instrumental in helping the individual teacher, school, and district. They have partnered with LaGala for fund raising and cooperative endeavors. The investments of time and money have truly benefited. One example is the dollars given to our science department for the Eastern Illinois University River Project. Those dollars created staff & student interest and were the impetus for writing the math/science grant, which brought in \$953,736 in four years! That’s an investment that paid huge dividends.
- We are also so appreciative of the Carrie Winters and Johnsie Fiock Fildes Foundation funds. Dollars from these foundations have helped individual students with scholarships, individual teachers, schools, district and the community. Again, an example of leverage of dollars. The Johnsie Fiock Fildes foundation gave \$2,500 to the district for planning an after school program. We used those dollars for staff meetings and time to prepare a 21st Century Learning Grant. That \$2,500 translated to \$150,000 this year with expectation of four more years of funding. Again, an investment that will benefit students and the community.

The opportunities for students at ERCU#1 are many. Parents and graduates comment on the variety of classes, the dual credit program, the athletic programs, the extra-curricular opportunities. They like the hands-on opportunities such as fine arts, career and technical offerings, Jobs for

Illinois Graduates that we have offered with or without funding, Special Education programs, JROTC, transportation for the band to perform at Disney or science students to go to Huntsville, field trips for K-12 students, FFA students to go to the State and National Convention (and speaking of awards – our FFA continues to win awards at all levels!) Students and parents have said they like the service projects, such as the trip to New Orleans to help build homes, the fact that students tutor, mentor, honor veterans, and visit the nursing homes.

Our schools have opened their doors to the community, but also to visitors from beyond Richland County. The elementary school serves as an ASPIRE demonstration site so teachers come and observe and learn from our teachers. As a result middle and high school teachers often come with their elementary colleagues and they visit our other schools. It was fun to listen as an administrator described sitting in on the high school discussion and coming away proud of our K-12 commitment to the struggling learner as well as all learners.

Building administrators and teachers have worked hard to connect our students to our schools. From Birth to 3 programs to parent and grandparent support programs to 5th and 6th grade/8th to 9th grade/ and 12th grade transition programs, the goal is to help students be successful.

The same is true as we look at our teachers and staff. The district provides a Mentoring Program for our new teachers. We do this in conjunction with Eastern Illinois University and are recognized as exceeding their expectations! Principals host new teacher luncheons and round tables throughout the year.

We have worked with EREA (East Richland Education Association) and have updated our teacher evaluation system. It is aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and ahead of the curve!

We can't talk about this decade without highlighting technology. Our classrooms today, the way we communicate with each other, and the way we depend on the World Wide Web have changed. A classroom at East Richland today is wired for 2010! We have projectors in almost all of our classrooms. We have computers – over 850 in the district! We have digital cameras, video cameras, notebooks, flash drives, document cameras, interactive white boards, wireless headphones, MP3 players, etc. We also

have invested in software for Accelerated Reader, Read 180, Think Link, etc. Our students can take classes via the internet. Some elementary students have e-pals overseas. We utilize e-mail to communicate with each other. We submit reports, budgets, and even grants on-line. We moodle, twitter, and use Facebook. Opportunities now for students and staff have increased exponentially!

This is not a big change, but it is certainly of note – as we look at the decade of success for ERCU#1, a main reason is Excellent Instruction! Our teachers are highly competent, skilled, and talented. They work relentlessly in providing quality instruction. It is HARD work and yet our teachers often make teaching look easy. They understand the Science of teaching, but also the ART of teaching.

The other reason we have been successful is because we have fantastic 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, it has been a great decade of learning. My congratulations and thanks to all of you.

III. 2010 and Beyond!

Tonight we reflect and rejoice in the success of the past decade. Our reality is that the State of Illinois is in financial trouble. We are monitoring our FY10 budget, reducing expenditures and tracking payments. At the same time, we are looking ahead at FY11 and are concerned that the State is projected to start July 1, 2010 with a deficit of over \$12 Billion dollars. We are concerned that the federal stimulus dollars will not be available, that the state revenues are less than projected, and that we receive almost half of our funding from the state.

The EREA and administrative team have worked on a menu of budget cuts. The professionalism of the staff has been and continues to be exemplary. We see many challenges and yet are eager and excited to meet these challenges with strength and courage.

You will remember - we have 150 second grade students. They are 7 or 8 years of age and they will graduate in 2020. As we meet the challenges with funding we must remember to have 2020 vision for ERCU#1.

So, very simply ~ while we are about operating efficiently and effectively we are about:

Learning – students and adults actively engaged in learning

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 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 achievement and are excited about the challenges and opportunities for 2010!