

## **Superintendent's Annual Report January 20, 2011**

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 2010 School Report Card, but had little time to discuss it. Tonight I will review the Report Card, share reflections from this past year, and then highlight our challenges and opportunities for the new year and decade.

- I. Each of you has a copy of the 2010 district report card. You will see that in 2010 we had 2,067 students – 1010 at ERES, 426 at ERMS and 631 at ERHS. Our low-income rate was 46.4% with a rate of 53.0% at the elementary, 45.8% at the middle school, and 36.5% at the high school. The high school dropout rate was .8%. Our mobility rate for the district was 13.0%. The attendance rate was 94.3%.

Parental contact was 98.8%: The pupil-teacher ratios at all levels are slightly 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade level than the state average, but fewer minutes in English/Language Arts at the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Science and Social Studies time at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level is significantly less.

We had 140 teachers with a high percentage of female teachers. 60.6% of the teachers have a bachelor's degree and 39.4% have a master's degree. All teachers are highly qualified.

The School District Financial section shows the average teacher's salary is 25% below state average. The average administrator's salary is only 5% below the state average. In 2007-2008 we exceeded the state average for expenses in instruction, general administration, and supporting services. This year you will note a 40.8% in other expenditures because of the middle school project. That expense skews other percentages. We had fewer other expenditures. Our budget is approximately \$18.8M with about 41.1% local funds, 41.1% general state aide, and other state funding and 17.5% federal funding.

The 2007 Equalized Assessed Valuation per pupil was \$78,267 with a tax rate of \$4.09. Our 2008-2009 Instructional Expenditure per pupil was \$4,896 and our Operating Expenditure was \$9,201 per pupil.

The ACT composite score was 20.8. The graduation rate was 100% including 100% males, 100% females, 100% students with disabilities, and 100% 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 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 not make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP); nor did our schools.

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

And then we must:

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

The 2010 target for students to meet and/or exceed was 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

In January of 2010 I presented a Reflections of the Decade. It was a celebration of the rich history of our district's excellence with highlights of accomplishments. You will remember that we had standing room only for the presentation. Please note that I understood then and understand today that they did not come to hear my presentation. Rather, teachers and parents came because of the financial trouble in the State of Illinois and their concern for children, services, and jobs. We shared that concern then and still do today.

While it seemed that our primary concern for 2010 was financial, we always remembered that our guiding principle was how to best serve our students and their families while continuing to provide excellence in education. Our job was to protect the students and the district!

Specifically, the EREA and the administrative team worked on a menu of budget cuts. We presented those cuts to you for consideration and in February before a large audience of students, parents, teachers, and the community you approved approximately \$1.4 Million dollars in cuts. In addition, we also approved a \$1 Million dollar roof project for ERES.

The action in February established the direction for the entire year. We planned, had meetings with groups and individuals, cut positions, added positions, worried about day-to-day payment of bills and payroll, wrote letters of support for staff leaving the district, made contacts with area schools to recommend our personnel, comforted staff and their spouses, listened to concerns, did all of the legal paperwork, and continued running a quality district. In our spare time we checked on the roof project.

We saw positive financial results in June as the budget showed we had trimmed \$100,000 a month from January to June. The FY'11 budget was presented in August and before we accepted it in September we were fortunate enough to receive the Education Jobs dollars from the federal government that provided a one-time help and support. The fact that we could have a balanced budget in FY'11 with all that was happening in the state and in the district was amazing!

None of the process was easy! From the cuts in the spring to the return to a new normal in the fall, we mourned the loss of our colleagues and the lack of dollars. We adjusted and readjusted to changes. We watched the slow progress of the roof project and hoped that it would be completed sometime. We have added new classes, provided additional support, and listened in order to learn how we can do things better.

We have learned that:

- We are thankful for the funds received from our local taxpayers and foundations as well as the federal dollars, whether they were from the American Reinvestment Recovery Act (ARRA), Education Jobs Fund or the standard Title and federal grants, because they always arrived in a timely manner.
- We are also thankful for the fact that we receive our general state aid twice a month and know that K-12 education is a priority in the state budget
- We have a great staff because all staff retained stepped up and assumed more responsibilities and more work. In addition, all of our staff that was rified and/or released was employed by another district and those districts rave about how fortunate they are to have such outstanding personnel
- Our students receive excellent instruction provided by our highly competent, skilled and talented teachers. They have opportunities for coursework and extra-curricular offerings that are extraordinary for a rural district
- Our community cares about education and provides physical, spiritual, and emotional support for our students and staff
- Our district provides exceptional resources for students and staff such as quality facilities, books, materials, and technology
- We are fortunate to have such outstanding people as teachers, support staff, administrators and Board Members
- Our reality is that the State of Illinois is in financial trouble and we must be aware and vigilant in our monitoring of our budget. We choose though to focus our energy on creating a brighter future for our students and our country. For you see – we have **great kids!** They are the hope and promise of this community. They are the reason we are all here. We are not Supermen nor are we Superwomen but we are committed and passionate about kids and learning! We want to be our best and exceed their expectations!

We have 180 students in kindergarten and they will graduate in 2023. They are our reminder daily of why we are here.

Very simply – we are about operating efficiently and effectively.

We are about:

Learning – our schools are places where students and adults actively are 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 thank you for your support this past year. It has taken all of us using our brains, mustering our courage and caring with our heart to survive and thrive. We ask now for your help and support as we continue making this district the best it can be.

Congratulations to our students, staff, faculty, administration, board members and community. We are proud of you and look forward to the challenges and opportunities in 2011!