



Superintendent's Column

We're moving forward with resolve

The highlight of every day is the time that I spend in our classrooms watching students learn from our highly skilled, professional and dedicated force of teachers and teacher aides. One of the things that I can always count on when I am in our elementary school classes is that a child will invariably ask me, "So, what does the Superintendent do, anyway?" After a couple of well-worn jokes about napping and snow days, I eventually explain that my real job is to try to make sure that everyone who works in our schools has everything they need to help each of our children have a great learning experience every day. That commitment is something that I take seriously and one that I am fortunate to share with all of our employees and our Board of Education.



This plan will serve our school community as a road map for every student's learning, outline simply stated goals and action steps designed to help us meet our goals, and include a funding plan so that we know how much our efforts will cost. We are fortunate to have considerable input collected from teachers and administrators last year and we will continue to seek input from stakeholders throughout September. We anticipate presenting our Strategic Action Plan to the Board of Education in October.

This summer, elements of our entire school community have been engaged in program implementation, professional development, and rich dialogue and training around effective leadership at all levels of our organization. All of these efforts are designed to assure that every one of our learners has a great learning experience in all of our classrooms every day. Here are some of the highlights:

- Elementary teachers participated in professional development around guided reading strategies, designed to help our youngest students learn to read and then be able to use reading

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to learn. We have also made a significant financial investment in the purchase of guided reading materials for each elementary school. This year, we expect to achieve regular use of this high lever-

age research-based strategy in every elementary classroom.

- Our elementary teachers also participated in professional development around building academic vocabulary, another high leverage and research-based teaching strategy that you should see in regular use throughout our elementary schools.

- We are prepared to deploy more than 200 iPad minis in our K-2 classrooms across the district. These devices will support our teachers and learners in building 21st century skills necessary for learning in middle school, high school and after high school. We are fortunate that the Hamburg Alumni Foundation funded a significant portion of the cost of the iPad minis.

- Work on our three-year Strategic Action Plan continues.

- Department Leaders will begin their work in each of our schools in September. Our decision to hire teachers to serve as Department Leaders was informed by research demonstrating that effective and focused teacher leadership is a positive factor in highly performing schools, and was made collaboratively with the Hamburg Teachers' Association.

- Our Department Leaders, our entire administrative team and our Board of Education — nearly every person who serves in any type of leadership role in our school district — participated in leadership training this summer designed to help us build a common language of effective leadership across our school district. Aside from the teacher in the classroom, the next most significant factor in promoting student learning is leadership.

- We continue to put the finishing touches on school-based schedules as we implement our newly-configured school day at each of our schools.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." We have thoughtfully undertaken a broad and ambitious mosaic of efforts designed to assure that we keep moving forward as a school district, but please know that at various points over the course of the next couple of years it will seem like we are flying with some initiatives and crawling with others. I am continually impressed by our entire school community's commitment to keep moving forward and feel confident that you will continue to be supportive and engaged with us as partners in our pursuit of outstanding learning for every student through excellence in teaching.

Remember that the first official day of student attendance for Grades 1-12 is Sept. 1st. Kindergarten students and parents should already have received an invitation to a Kindergarten Orientation in your child's school on Sept. 1st, with the first official attendance day for those students on Sept. 2nd.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Hamburg School Community as your Superintendent of Schools. I hope you'll contact me directly if there is any way that I can assist you with a school-related issue or question.