



Ephrata Area School District

The Ephrata Area School District (EASD) is a mid-sized suburban public school district located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The district strives for students to adopt a growth mindset and acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in whatever comes next in their lives.” According to its articulated values and belief statements, it recognizes the importance of shared partnerships; trusting relationships; a highly skilled, compassionate, and empathetic staff; technology as a powerful instructional and learning tool; skills and dispositions needed in a rapidly changing world; personally relevant and authentic learning; and modeling and promotion of students’ and staff members’ growth mindsets.

EASD acknowledges that education needs to be redesigned so that students are prepared to contribute in an ever-changing world. Similarly, the educational system involves the community in the redesign process. A range of indicators suggest that this Lighthouse System is moving toward that goal, including a clearly articulated Life Ready Graduate profile, an instructional model that focuses on personalization and experiential learning, and an extensive monitoring and certification process that includes a Life Ready Graduate Student Certificate. Similarly, the district reinforces the value of integrating multiple disciplines whenever possible as well as staffing processes necessary to support this priority. This approach includes Cornerstone projects and design challenges are core elements of the student experience. Personalization is another key component of EASD’s approach to educating its students. Examples of this process are evident at all grade levels, including clearly articulated competencies and learning targets, use of Student Data Notebooks (to encourage self-monitoring and self-regulation), a MakerBus to encourage creative problem solving and ongoing student reflection activities.

A student-centered and future-oriented approach to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and social-emotional learning includes ongoing work with regional workforce partners to inform district decision-making processes. Such partnerships as Career Ready Lancaster! (CRL!), Lancaster County Workforce Development Board, Lancaster STEM Alliance, and Life Ready Graduate Community Partners work collaboratively to identify and reinforce work-ready and college-ready skills (from communication and empathy to creativity and innovation). The system makes extensive use of instructional coaches as well as a newly created position called a Student Engagement Facilitator (responsible for working with stakeholders to develop and sustain programs promoting student voice, engagement, and a sense of belonging).

Like all Learning 2025 Lighthouse systems, EASD engages community members and stakeholder groups in creating and realizing a portrait of necessary graduates’ skills, knowledge, and dispositions. Processes include ongoing student and parent surveys, opportunities for student service and career development, as well as regular participation and presentations with local organizations (e.g., local chambers of commerce, Rotary Club, and Mainspring of Ephrata). EASD strongly supports those who are willing to try out new ideas, engage students in new and unique ways, and demonstrate how such transformations can serve all students so that everyone can learn and improve. Innovative initiatives

such as *EphrataInnovates*, Education Foundation Venture Grants, and a student investment club reinforce the strong connection between students' school experience and the world beyond it. Similarly, the system creates multiple pathways for student learning leading to post-secondary opportunities, career experiences, and development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary in a rapidly changing world. Program options include internship opportunities, Dual Enrollment, High School Job and Internship Fairs, the Lancaster Career and Technology Center, and Project Build a Better Future. The latter teaches Ephrata Area School District students, ages 18-21 with special needs, to prepare for life outside the classroom. It reinforces learners' capacity to become as independent as possible, improve job skills for future work experiences, and create a seamless transition after they leave school.