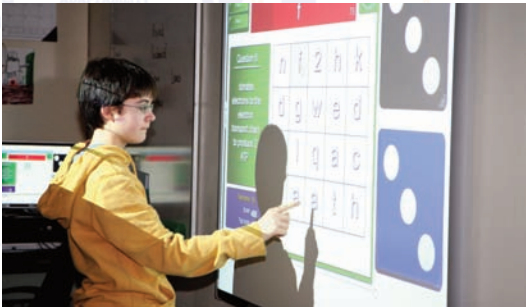


century



Annual Report 2010



A 21st Century Learning Community



environments

Superintendent's Message



Dr. Donna J. DeSiato

As we prepare for the future, we are witnessing progress in fulfilling our mission as a result of the collaborative implementation of our five-year Strategic Plan. Our ESM Strategic Plan provides a road map in preparing our students for the 21st Century with the integration of critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation skills that are essential for success in college, career and citizenship in our global, ever-changing world.

We are proud to present East Syracuse Minoa Central School District's Fifth Annual Report. This report highlights the second year implementation of our plan and recognizes many of the successes of our students and staff. The overwhelming support and engagement of ESM students, staff, parents, community members, business partners and higher education is a key factor in the accomplishments of individuals, groups, departments, teams and our District.

We are grateful for the sharing of time, talent, energy and expertise by our ESM community members in helping us to realize our vision of becoming an exemplary learning community by preparing students for success in the 21st Century.

Board of Education

ESM prides itself in student success, staff commitment, family involvement and strong business/community partnerships. As members of the Board of Education, we recognize the value of education in preparing our youth for success in college, career and life. Your continued input, involvement and support is valued and appreciated. We take this opportunity to share many of the significant achievements in this report, as a result of the creative, collaborative and talented efforts of our students, staff, parents and community. As you review our ESM Annual Report we invite you to join in our celebration of student, staff and District accomplishments!



Pictured above are ESM Board of Education Members, from left (front row) Allison Rumschik, Debbie Kolod (president), Jennifer Steigerwald and D. Paul Waltz; and (back row) Mickey Muscolino, Leah Cushing, Debra Eichholtz (vice president), Nadine Zesky and Kevin Burke.

Vision

Our vision, sets the direction for the future: *The East Syracuse Minoa Central School District will be an exemplary 21st Century learning community whose graduates are prepared to excel in a complex, interconnected, changing world.*

Mission

Our mission affirms our primary purpose: *The East Syracuse Minoa Central School District will prepare students for the 21st Century by engaging all learners in meaningful learning experiences that meet the highest educational and ethical standards in a caring, collaborative learning community supported through partnerships with parents and families, businesses, civic organizations, and higher education.*

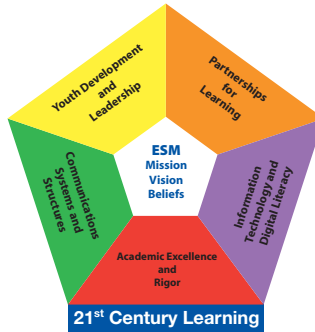
Strategic Plan Implementation Continues in 2009-10

During the 2009-2010 school year, ESM continued the implementation phase of the District's 5-year strategic plan.

The strategic plan has five areas:

- Academic Excellence and Rigor;
- Communications, Systems and Structures;
- Information Technology and Digital Literacy;
- Partnerships for Learning; and
- Youth Development and Leadership.

Action teams and subcommittees have been



collaboratively working in each of the five areas to implement annual action items identified in the strategic plan to fulfill our mission and realize our vision. Each action item is an essential step toward measurable goals and accomplishments benchmarked for each area.

The integrity of the implementation of the plan keeps our focus on providing ESM students with a quality education to prepare them for a 21st Century highly competitive and technologically-advanced world.

Information Technology and Digital Literacy

It has been a busy few years for the Information Technology and Digital Literacy Action Team. An infusion of new technology is giving our students the 21st Century tools they need to enhance their learning and excel educationally.

Each school now has video conferencing capabilities so students can interact with people around the world without leaving their classroom. ESM has also deployed interactive white boards and document cameras.

In 2009-2010 the District implemented "SchoolMessenger" our new notification system for school closings, delays and important messages. The Action Team also developed an implementation plan for the Student-Parent Portal.

Another highlight last year was the development of Student Technology Standards. These standards provide guidelines for student technology skills at each grade level.

The Action Team also created a three-year Technology Plan that provides a framework for our ESM technology initiatives and includes exploring technology tools that support student learning.

In addition, we launched a new student management system called "SchoolTool." This new system provides ESM teachers, parents and students with access to a vast amount of student data and information. The system includes the Student-Parent Portal and SchoolTool IQ/Student Analysis capability being implemented this fall.

During the 2010-2011 school year, the Action Team plans to work primarily on two major focus areas: increasing communication with our parents/community and implementing new technologies within our classrooms. District projects include:

- **Student-Parent Portal:** This secure website was introduced this fall so parents and guardians can monitor their child's progress in school and students can check their own records. Using the Portal, students and parents can e-mail teachers,



Teachers are engaging students in new ways with interactive whiteboards, which are giant, touch-sensitive computer screens with internet capabilities.

check grades, view attendance, review contact information and more.

- **New Technology:** Equipment is being deployed in all schools including more interactive white boards and document cameras as well as laptop carts for classroom use, I-Pod Touches, flip cameras and more.
- **New Website:** A website will be developed and launched using the vendor selected last year.
- **SchoolTool IQ/Student Analysis System:** Using student data, this system will help us more efficiently evaluate student learning by identifying trends and patterns that might be impacting our students' ability to improve.
- **Staff Training:** The Action Team will be reviewing and updating training opportunities for our staff to support the integration of technology.

As always, the Information Technology and Digital Literacy Action Team is interested in any participation from students, parents and community members. If you would like to know more, please contact Kieran O'Connor at 434-3008 or koconnor@esmschools.org.

Academic Excellence and Rigor

To be able “to excel in a complex interconnected, changing world” as stated in our District’s vision statement, our students need to excel in the “4 Cs” of 21st Century learning (critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, communication and creativity) as they develop a solid base of core academic subject knowledge.

To be successful, our students need more than having knowledge—they need to know how to use knowledge. They need to learn how to think at high levels. This extends beyond just remembering and understanding a concept. They need to know how to apply, analyze, evaluate and create with their ideas. Most important, students need to develop the skills to self-manage and self-direct their learning and work.

Highlights from the 2009-2010:

One strategic planning action item focused on the development of a new pre-k to grade 12 curriculum for English Language Arts (ELA). This new curriculum integrates higher level critical thinking to prepare students for the kinds of reading, writing, listening and speaking that they need for today’s world.

For example, students need more than just the ability to summarize one text. In today’s world, with information and opinions easily accessible, students need to be able to understand key ideas from different texts, compare the information or perspectives provided and form their own opinions from multiple sources. Students need to be able to generate quality questions and learn the skills to find answers to their questions. Our students also need to be able to read and



Minoa’s Space and Rocket Club is one way students are learning 21st Century skills such as problem solving and working in teams.

thinking and problem solving, as well as higher level thinking skills in the content areas. Our new report cards focus on student strengths and learning goals to help students learn how to set and achieve goals and measure their progress.

Another focus is clarifying what steps to take when a child is not responding to instruction. Approximately 30 teachers and administrators met to design our “Response to Intervention (RtI)” plan. This guides classroom teachers to provide instruction matched to a student’s specific learning needs, communicates how to determine if a student needs extra assistance and how to measure progress. We are continuing to work on our RtI plan at the secondary level this year.

A motivated group of teachers and administrators also met at the middle and high schools last year to study 21st Century teaching and learning.

Highlights for 2010-2011:

To continue the development of 21st Century skills in our students’ learning, some of the action plans we are working on this year are:

- **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM):** Develop a plan to infuse more STEM skills into all students’ learning;
- **Middle School Literacy Review:** Complete the literacy review process at Pine Grove Middle School and make recommendations to better align literacy instruction (in all content areas) with research;
- **Assessments:** Align our assessments with critical thinking skills;
- **Grading:** Study our grade 5-12 grading relative to current research and make recommendations for change; and
- **Professional Development:** Implement plans to support staff in their continual improvement of content knowledge and skills to meet the needs of today’s learners.



Pine Grove was one of only four schools in the state to earn the first “New York State ASCD Educating the Whole Child for the 21st Century Award.”

write non-fiction, while developing a love of reading and passion for lifelong learning.

Many educators worked to update our ELA curriculum, which is being implemented this year. ESM is one of the first schools in the state to align its curriculum with the new national Common Core State Standards.

In addition, a group of dedicated teachers, administrators and parents worked in 2009-2010 to revise and update the District’s elementary report cards. The goal was to develop report cards that emphasize expectations for learning that concentrate on communication, collaboration, critical

Youth Development and Leadership

During the 2009-2010 school year, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) model was implemented districtwide. This model creates a foundation for a positive school culture by teaching, modeling and rewarding expected behavior in the school setting. PBIS is a researched-based model that supports a school culture free of bullying and harassment and significantly reduces the number of discipline referrals.

The Youth Development and Leadership Action Team continued to collect student activity data with a goal of involving all students in school-related activities. More than 75 percent of the students at the middle and high school levels are involved in at least one school activity. Plans are underway to reach out to those youth who are not yet involved by engaging them in activities to strengthen their connection to school.

Students created a video presentation to highlight student involvement, capture student voice and promote leadership skills. The video illustrates the importance of—and impact on—service to others.

The development of leadership skills is also a focus of the Action Team. In January, 30 students participated in a day-long training in Sean Covey's "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens." In addition to this training, students in grades 3-12 have been recruited to guide and direct the Youth Development and Leadership Action Team.

The establishment of this youth-led, adult-supported action team has generated many creative and innovative project ideas. Service to others continues to be an important



Plans are underway get more students involved in school activities like the ESF Festival of Nations.

focal point for the team.

Sixty students from across the District in grades 3 through 12 have met to discuss a districtwide signature service learning project planned for January 2011. Students chose a project that will be an annual intergenerational activity involving elders in our community.

In 2010-2011, the Action Team plans even more opportunities for student connection and involvement. In January, another Sean Covey leadership training will be offered to middle and high school students. Committee members will continue to seek ways to involve all students and explore opportunities to record student impact statements and testimonies.

Partnerships for Learning

In 2009-10, the Partnerships for Learning Action Team focused on two areas: the development of a Career Portfolio project through the Central High School Career Center and the continued development of Partnerships for Learning. The partnerships are collaborations with people or organizations outside of our District to enrich the education of our students in ways that support achievement of educational and career goals.

Some highlights include the development of specific career education activities for 10th and 11th grade students, including job shadowing, internships and job-ready skill development.

The Action Team also conducted a Districtwide survey to inventory Partnerships for Learning.

With this information, the Action Team will be formulating strategies for the development of future Partnerships for Learning, focusing in particular on those that foster 21st Century teaching and learning.

During 2010-2011, the Action Team will facilitate the implementation of a program where our high school students will use a computer-based career planning tool called *Naviance* to track their progress and analyze their post graduation plans. This will serve as part of the 10th grade Career Portfolio component. The Action Team will then de-



The non-profit East Syracuse Minoa Education Foundation provides financial grants for district programs that are not otherwise funded by tax dollars or state and local funds. This spring the District honored the partnership.

velop and propose an 11th grade component of the Career Portfolio to prepare our students for college and career.

In 2010-2011, the Action Team will also develop and implement a plan to engage parents in the Career Portfolio project. In addition, the team will implement a plan to utilize the expertise of our parents to connect our students to careers and the workplace. Finally, the monitoring of all district partnerships will continue.

Communications, Systems and Structures

Two Action Teams—one for Communications and the other for Systems and Structures—along with their sub-committees worked on several action plans in 2009-2010.

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) that studied the structure of the school day completed its feasibility study last fall including examining start and dismissal times and a longer instructional school day.

A fiscal analysis revealed that implementation of any of the recommended potential options would result in a significant tax rate increase for our residents. Given the current challenging fiscal situation for school districts across the state, the CAC recommendations were put on hold. Information gathered during the process will be utilized in future discussions.

ESM also began using its new district brand identity. The new brand identity is a visual means of communicating our strategic plan and of saying who we are. It says we are student-centered and innovative with a global perspective that prepares our students for the world.

The Action Team developed a long-range Public Relations and Communications Plan to guide the District in improving two-way communication with our community. The plan contains strategies to update the District's website, written communications, the key communicators' network and social media opportunities and develop connections with realtors and extend business outreach.

Other key areas of focus included:

- Expanding professional development resources and connecting with outside organizations to enhance the District's wellness program;
- Revising transition programs for students entering



Central High School's new library media center is among the improvements creating a 21st Century learning environment for our students as they prepare for college and career.

kindergarten, sixth, and ninth grades;

- Aligning the District biennial shared decision-making plan with the Strategic Plan and 21st Century learning;
- Implementing and piloting a new version of the Annual Professional Performance Review for teachers, librarians, counselors and school nurses; and
- Aligning the School Improvement Planning (SIP) process with the Strategic Plan.

In 2010-2011, the Communications, Systems and Structures Action Team focus will include upgrading the District website, enhancing parent utilization of the website, establishing a District committee to evaluate 21st Century learning and surveying District staff and community members on the status of 21st Century learning.

Extra Curricular

Co-curricular and extra curricular activities promote student success. The 2009-2010 accomplishments of our teams, band and clubs were outstanding:

- The ESM Spartan Marching Band placed second in the Small School I class at the 2009 New York State Field Band Championships.
- Section III Champions included: Dustin Moss, Wrestling/171 lbs; Steve Episcopo, Pole Vault; Peter Ferstler, 3000 Meter Steeplechase; and Michael Coogan, 3200 Meter Run.
- The ESM Central High School Wind Ensemble received a Gold rating at the NYS School Music Association's Major Organizations Festival.
- The Pine Grove sixth grade band took 1st place in its class at the Darien Lakes Music in the Parks Festival.
- Varsity Boys Basketball and Varsity Wrestling each earned 2010 first place Sportsmanship Awards out of 103 and 70 schools respectively.
- The ESM Musical Theatre's performance of "Fiddler



Funded by the ESM Education Foundation, Fremont performed "The Best Little Theater in Town."

on the Roof" was the first musical production in our newly remodeled auditorium.

- OHSL Class A Freedom Division League Champions included Andrew Menter, Boys Gymnastics Floor

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- Exercise; Michael Coogan, 3200 Meter Run; and Meghan Visser, 2000 Meter Steeplechase.
- OHSL Class A Freedom Division Champion teams included Boys Varsity Bowling (Division/Tournament), Girls Varsity Bowling (Tournament), and Boys and Girls 4 x 800 Meter Relay (League).
- DECA Chapter winners at the New York State Career Conference included Morgan Marini, Destinee Hurson, Todd Ballard, Katie Brown and Danielle Russo (2nd place finishes); and Taylor Blume, Carly Eaton, Ryan Dadey, Matt Ehde and Quadear Mike (3rd place).

Celebrations of Success

ESM students and staff celebrated success with many awards and recognitions in 2009-2010.

- ESM Central High School won the 2009 Business Department of the Year award from the New York State Education Department.
- Pine Grove's Kevin Hernandez won a National Silver Medal in the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.
- The NYS Assembly declared ESM Central High School as December 2009 "School of the Month," recognizing high-quality schools and dedicated teachers.
- In the Middle School Science Olympiad, Nicholas Drogo, Phillip Falcone and Sofia Salcedo won 1st place awards, while John Drogo earned a 3rd place honor.
- At the 23rd Feats of Clay exhibition at OCC, Erin Carhart won the Senior Award, Dave Simmons won the Clayscapes Expression Award and Amanda Wall won the Syracuse Ceramics Guild Sculpture Award.
- Derek Pontillo earned the top regional score in round one of the National Chemistry Olympiad. He and Shane Stone qualified for the National exam.
- At the Scholastic Art Awards, students won 11 Gold Keys, 14 Silver Keys, 3 portfolio awards and 21 Honorable Mentions. David Simmons placed first in the Syracuse Ceramic Guild Senior High category and Danielle Russo won a Hanford Pharmaceutical American Visions Award.
- At the Greater Syracuse Scholastic Science Fair, Josh Nubla won Senior Level Highest Honors and then competed at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. Christian Larrabee earned Senior Level High Honors and the American Chemical Society's "Overall Best" and went to the NYS Science Congress. East Syracuse Elementary's Eric Randazzo earned the Fifth Grade Highest Honors Award.
- Winners in the American Chemical Society's illustrated poem contest included, Holly Babcock (1st place national, grade 3-5), Chris Clappin (2nd place national, grade 6-8) and Davahn Richards (1st place regional, grade K-2).
- Pine Grove's Cole Greabell and Cameron Schiavone represented ESM in the Post-Standard/WCNY Spelling Bee.
- ESM Central High School earned the "New School Award" at the New York State Science Olympiad Competition.
- Superintendent Dr. Donna J. DeSiato received a 2010 Women in Leadership Award from WTVH-5, a "Women Who Mean Business" Award from the American Red Cross and was also recognized by Onondaga Community College as one of their Alumni Faces.
- Marcia Kelley, school information officer, earned her Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), an international mark of distinction in the field.
- Park Hill Pre-K opened a school library so students can now check out books to take home.
- Woodland Elementary fifth graders had their artwork on display at the Museum of Young Art (MOYA) in downtown Syracuse.
- The first districtwide Festival of Nations featured booths representing 18 countries and regions with cultural food, crafts and authentic entertainment.
- ESM was one of 112 school districts and Board BOCES in the state to receive the "2010 School Safety Excellence Award" from the Utica National Insurance Group.
- Standard & Poor's Credit Market Services assigned ESM an AA- rating with a stable outlook, which allows ESM to save on debt service interest rates.



Kevin Hernandez, top left, (with Art Teacher Les Ryon) won a medal in the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, while Eric Randazzo, far right, earned a top award at the Greater Syracuse Scholastic Science Fair.

ESM Incorporates Green Technology

Environmental Literacy, which is one of the 21st Century learning themes, focuses on awareness/action that addresses impacts on air, climate, land, food, energy, water and ecosystems. ESM is embracing green technology in the classroom and throughout our buildings.

Pine Grove started a pilot composting program in the spring that is being fully implemented this fall. After lunch, student volunteers help guide classmates to separate their compostable food scraps. This effort was spearheaded by ESM's Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) Public Affairs class and our Buildings and Grounds Department with training support from ESM's SUNY-ESF Global Environment class.

This spring ESM's SUPA Public Affairs students also initiated a "Save the Rain" water reclamation project to save roof rainwater runoff. The rain project was partnered with an organic vegetable and herb garden. The resulting garden at the high school is used by ESM's Life Skills students with potential for future implementation throughout the District. Life Skills students, along with the Global Environment class and the Buildings and Grounds Department share the garden maintenance.

Exploring alternative energy sources, the District has 108 solar panels on the high school roof. The panels feed real-time data into a system that monitors the output of solar energy as well as water, gas and electric usage throughout the District.



Central High School has a touch-screen kiosk and people can also visit a website to monitor solar energy, water, gas and electric usage throughout the District. Teachers can use the data in many educational ways.

Provided by a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority grant in partnership with Siemens Building Technologies, the monitoring system is connected to a website (<http://esmchs.esmcsd.greentouchscreen.com/>) and two touch-screen kiosks that can be used by teachers in a number of educational ways. ESM is the only Pre-K through grade 12 district in the state with these environmental learning tools.

The solar panels are part of an energy performance contract with Siemens to reduce energy costs while improving air quality and preserving the environment. We have replaced aging boilers, windows, doors and lights. This year alone the district has conservatively estimated a \$400,000 reduction in utility costs. The agreement is expected to save more than \$9 million in energy costs over 18 years.

The District is also exploring an environmental partnership project with the Village of Minoa and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Minoa would use food waste from ESM to help run a biodigester that turns food waste and sewage into electricity, with leftover waste being converted into fertilizer. This innovative local project would also serve as a tangible model to teach students about green technology.

We hope these projects throughout the District will heighten environmental consciousness and spread from students to their families and the larger community for the benefit of all.



Reducing their carbon footprint, Pine Grove students are composting food scraps, thanks to assistance from ESM's Public Affairs class, our Buildings and Grounds Department and ESM's SUNY-ESF Global Environment class.

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