
Director's Report March 2006

2006-2007 Budget

Preparation of the 2006-2007 ECTS Budget by administrative staff is complete. The superintendents took an additional month to review the proposal and endorsed it “with reservations” at the March Professional Advisory Council meeting. The budget proposal calls for an 8.39% increase in district contributions. The operating committee will receive a presentation of the budget at their March board meeting. The administration is respectfully requesting their approval. If the committee approves the budget this month, participating school districts will be able to review and act on the budget at their April meeting.

Chapter 339—Vocational Education Audit

A team of 12 auditors will be in Erie County the week of April 3 to review the career and technical education programs at ECTS and our participating school districts. Chapter 339 is the State’s educational standards for vocational education. It has been several years since the State has conducted audits of the career and technical education system. The focus of the audit is program improvement.

A workgroup comprised of 10 administrative and support staff has been compiling documents for the audit. Areas reviewed by the visiting team of auditors include curriculum, planning, guidance, personnel and facilities. We invite board members to review a program audit checklist in the supplemental information section of the board packet.

Erie County Land Purchase

Since the last operating committee meeting, several events have occurred regarding the County’s purchase of ECTS land. On Tuesday, March 7, the Erie County Emergency Management Agency held a meeting for “neighbors” of the technical school. About 25 residents received information about the proposed public safety building from Joe Weindorf and other members of his staff. The technical school hosted the session that lasted two hours. In addition, on Monday, March 13, Judge Randall Cunningham reviewed and approved the petition by the school districts to sell the 25.5 acres. After some customary site studies by the County, the final step in the sale of the property is approval by Erie County Council.

Leadership & Management Survey

The mid-year version of the Leadership & Management Survey was conducted in February. Results from the survey are available for review in the supplemental information section. Thirty-seven faculty and staff members took the time to complete the on-line survey. This is nearly double the number of employees that completed the paper version of the survey at this time last year.

Overall, results for most categories showed improvement. Several staff members have concerns with the performance of the Director. The Director has extended a public invitation to faculty or staff members to clarify their concerns, as the results of the survey are anonymous. The Director will respectfully take into consideration the concerns of the staff members.

Welding Program

A second welder-training program started on Monday, March 6 with five companies participating. They include Riley Power, Custom Engineering, McShane Welding, Erie Shipyard and Zeyon. The program will last five weeks. The Northwest Industrial Resource Center is working with other career and technical schools across the region in setting up training programs like this one.

Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership

The technical school, as the representative for the 11 participating school districts, will be attending the March 23 Full Membership meeting of the Regional Chamber's Growth Partnership. The purpose of the Growth Partnership, through dialogue and research, is to work to identify the most critical challenges and issues facing the region. The nature of the issue will determine the form of action by the Growth Partnership's staff and leadership.

Issues under consideration by the Growth Partnership include:

- Training the Workforce
- Multi-County, Multi-State Airport Authority
- City of Erie Financial Recovery
- Regional Water
- Gaming Revenue Use
- Authority Appointments
- Regional Asset Plan
- Transportation Issues
- Minimum Wage Hike
- Branding of the Erie Region
- Civic Coordinating Committee
- Capital Budget Prioritization
- Community Fund Drives
- Sustaining the Economic Development System
- Community Vision

The Growth Partnership will prioritize the list, which will provide guidance for where the Partnership will focus its energy and resources.

Special Education

Pat Holland, Jan Kennerknecht and I continued our work on a "range of services" for special education students. The "working document" of the proposed services is included in the supplemental information section. A sub-committee of superintendents at the April Professional Advisory Council meeting will review the list of services. The superintendents are intent on identifying and providing the services at the technical school that best serve this population.

Northwest Pennsylvania Technical Community College

The technical community college initiative continues. On the advice of PDE, Rod Tarr, Director at Venango County Career and Technology Center, and I talked with Jim Buckheit, Executive Director of the State Board of Education about the initiative. Mr. Buckheit offered to provide a copy of the most recent application, by a region, for the approval of community college. Dr. Judy Miller, Dave Krinking and I are still working to establish the Erie County Steering Committee for the community college. We are considering several "proposed" business leaders and a legislative representative.

The concept has been receiving good reviews as it is presented to various parties. Dr. Miller, Michelle Zieziula, Executive Director of the Center for Workforce Excellence in Northwest Pennsylvania, and I assisted Neil Donovan in a presentation to the superintendents in Crawford County. Also, in the supplemental section, there is a copy of a story from the *News-Herald* in Oil City reporting on Mr. Tarr's presentation to the Venango County joint operating committee.

Regional Collaboration & Satellite Programs

Discussion with Wattsburg continued regarding the technical school serving as the "operator" of their Diversified Occupations program. Elaine Shaffer and I met with Doug McGarvey, Assistant Principal, and Cheryl Krider, Diversified Occupations teacher, to review scheduling, curriculum and current practices. Wattsburg is interested in ECTS staffing the program for both classroom and work-based portions of the program. The administration is conducting a fiscal analysis and evaluating a staffing pattern before giving Wattsburg a final proposal.