
**Erie County Technical School
Director's Report
August 2014**

Welcome to the 2014-2015 School Year

July was relatively quiet but the hum picked up in August. No major projects were undertaken this summer. As faculty, staff and students return for 2014-2015, they will notice very few changes from last year. However, administrative staff members fine-tuned one aspect or another of various processes or procedures. In particular, this year we will fully implement the PDE-required Teacher Effectiveness program. Other than that, what was good in 2013-2014 will be even better in 2014-2015.

Writing

Under the tagline of "Good Writing Reflects Good Thinking," the campus will continue to build the writing skills of each student. Using our progressive-skills model recommended by our Reading Coach, Robin Grimes, students will again write every day. We will continue to use two- or three-sentence responses. By the end of 2014-2015 we will be looking for complete paragraphs, multi-paragraph essays, and ultimately to a two- or three-page essays.

We are adding a grammar enrichment to this year's writing campaign. Each week, our writing coach will provide a mini grammar lesson that faculty members can present, with an exercise that will help students understand and practice the 'grammar rule.' As an example, the first week's grammar lesson was on the proper use of its and it's.

Many of our faculty members already incorporate writing assignments into their instructional plan. Just as we have used reading and mathematics as *instructional tools*, rather than *instructional content*, we will continue to promote writing as another tool to deliver and reinforce the technical content. The intent is to make writing comfortable, comprehensive, consistent, and effectual. We want our students to be able to 'reflect their good thinking' through good writing.

Building Renovation

We have worked with architect Chris Coughlin and staff from Tower Engineering to refine a multi-year renovation project. The project, as currently planned, spans four years beginning in 2015-2016. The total cost of renovations and an addition is \$27,096,933. The proposal will be presented to the Operating Committee during the August work session, and then to the superintendents at their September Professional Advisory Council meeting. There are still many more discussions for this topic to occur over the next couple of months. For example, funding strategies, including or excluding the addition, and extending the schedule to five or more years.

PDE Teacher Effectiveness Program

PDE is requiring all public schools to implement fully the Educator Effectiveness Program during the 2014-2015 school year. Administrators reviewed current observation and evaluation

practices in terms of their alignment to the required model. The overall assessment is that current ECTS practices align very well with the PDE model. The only component we need to add to our observation and evaluation system is the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) element. While SLOs are unique and complex, we feel we have a simple solution for the majority of our faculty. We are presenting this month an administrative procedure for teacher evaluation.

Regional Public Safety Training Facility

The technical school hosted a meeting, sponsored by Senator Sean Wiley, of the Regional Safety Training Center Committee on August 5. Representatives from the County's Emergency Management Agency, the Police Academy at Mercyhurst Northeast, Gannon University, and a Public Safety Advisory Committee attended the meeting.

The proposed facility would contain a driving course, an indoor firing range, police academy classrooms, a physical training gym, along with meeting and office space. The group looked at the land off the back of the high school building, as well as space in the Skill Center building. The proposed footprint would be approximately 20 acres, perhaps more if the Skill Center would not serve as the classroom, office and meeting space. The group was very excited about what they saw in terms of the land and potential use of the Skill Center building. They are enthusiastic about its central location and proximity to the 911 Center and new State Police barracks.

There are many details to work out, as this project is in its early stages. There is the potential for funding to underwrite the cost of construction. In addition, there was discussion about designing the facilities to incorporate the Erie City School District's public safety program and a new, similar program available to county students.

New Program Recommendation

The administrative staff has finalized the report on the recommendation of a new program. The administration will present the white paper to the Operating Committee at the August meeting. The bottom line, give strong consideration to a health careers program, but wait for the building renovation and addition to be completed.

RCTC

Registration for Term I opened August 4 and closed August 15. Classes will start the week of September 2. At the time of this report, there were 117 registrations in 32 classes. Of the 32 classes, 23 met our 'break-even enrollment' criteria, resulting in 107 registrations. Projected gross revenue is \$35,065 and net profit of \$11,983. Registrations are about equal to last year.

In terms of corporate training, we completed a six-hour Shop Math Workshop for Industrial Sales and Manufacturing at the end of June. The maintenance technician training for the Erie Housing Authority ended in July. We received an inquiry from Modern Industries for some

GD&T training, as well as, an inquiry from the U.S. District Probation Office in Pittsburgh to consider another technical training program for parolees.

We have also committed this year to conduct precision machining training on a consistent basis. Our programming in this area is primarily CNC machine operation. CareerLink is sponsoring students in these classes. We have lowered our minimum enrollment in these classes to two students. We think there is good market interest and potential in this area if we develop a reputation of running these classes. In addition, to coincide with this initiative, we are developing a CNC Machine Set-up series of courses. This series of classes is the logical progression from the machine operation series.

Personnel

Please extend a warm ECTS welcome to our new staff members:

- Christian 'Mike' Miller, Computer Networking
- Donald 'Marty' Burnham, Electronics
- Robert Eggleston, Mathematics (part-time)

We continue to conduct a search for an industrial electricity professional to fill the vacancy in our Electrical Engineering program. We welcome any recommendations you may have.

Other Action Items this July and August

Other items the director has been working on in July and August include:

1. Coordinated Summer JAM activities for the Foundation in July
2. Conducted end-of-year performance appraisals on all administrators
3. Reviewed performance of the Food Service department and discussed potential changes
4. Refining the RCTC marketing plan for 2014-2015
5. Met with Paul Francis on the development of a training program in diesel mechanics
6. Worked with the Protection Institute to review and refine aspects of the campus safety plan relative to building exits, safety zones, and rally points
7. Completed a PDE/BCTE grant application for equipment. Last year's grant totaled \$34,938.46

Director's Travel and Meetings—July & August 2014

The director's recent and scheduled meetings include:

- ❖ *ECTS Renovation Project*; ECTS, July 22; with Chris Coughlin, Del VonVolkenberg, Terri Birchard and Joe Tarasovitch; to discuss long-term project
- ❖ *Food Service Department Review*; ECTS; July 22; with Justin Tech and Terri Birchard; to discuss 2013-2014 department performance and potential changes to operations.
- ❖ *Workforce Investment Board of NWPA*; Meadville; July 23; monthly board meeting

- ❖ *PACTA Summer Conference*; State College; July 30 – August 1; with Joe Tarasovitch and Pat Holland; annual summer conference of career and technical education administrators
- ❖ *Regional Public Safety Training Facility*; ECTS; August 5; to discuss proposed use of ECTS grounds and facilities
- ❖ *Art & Industry, Artist in the Classroom*; United Way of Erie County; August 7; with Bill Jackson of the United Way, Amanda Sisson Brown of Arts Erie, and Tom Ferraro, local teaching artist; to discuss ECST student participation in this new community initiative
- ❖ *Educator Effectiveness Refresher Course*; IU5; August 8; with Joe Tarasovitch; review of PDE guidelines and procedures for observation and evaluation program
- ❖ *New Teacher Orientation*; ECTS; August 13; welcome new faculty
- ❖ *WIN Career Readiness Report*; Edinboro University; August 14; with Remle Moyak; to hear a presentation on employment statistics for Erie County
- ❖ *Building Renovation Project, Millcreek Township School District*; Millcreek Education Center; August 15; with William Hall, superintendent; Marcy Moseley, assistant superintendent, John DiPlacido and Jim Bucksbee, Operating Committee members
- ❖ *Summer JAM Debriefing*; Epic Web Studios; August 18; with Melissa Galbraith of Media Access and David Hunter of Epic Web Studios; to discuss project marketing and performance
- ❖ *Workforce Investment Board*; Meadville; August 20; monthly board meeting
- ❖ *Workforce Development Blueprint*; Erie; August 21; participant in a discussion group projecting employment trends in Northwest Pennsylvania, part of the Governor's Jobs First grant to Northwest Pennsylvania
- ❖ *Senatorial Advisory Committee on Education*; Erie; August 21; advisory panel to Senator Sean Wiley
- ❖ *ECTS Renovation Project*; ECTS; August 22; with Chris Coughlin, Del VonVolkenberg, Terri Birchard and Tower Engineering; planning meeting for presentation of project plans to Joint Operating Committee
- ❖ *2014-2015 Faculty & Staff In-service*; ECTS; Thursday, August 21, Friday, August 22 and Monday, August 25
- ❖ *Professional Unit Negotiations*; ECTS; August 25
- ❖ *Modern Industries*; teleconference; August 28; with Dave Jacquel of Modern Industries and Kit Carson, RCTC instructor; to discuss a corporate training plan in GD&T