

Leipsic Local State of the Schools: February 23, 2009

After a year of focusing on the academic vision for Leipsic Local Schools, it is the purpose of the second annual State of the Schools to re-examine-- not the Vision nor the Rationale—but rather the Action Plans that were recommended to the Leipsic Board of Education. Our Vision cannot and will not change within a year; we need to concentrate on the change and growth that has taken place and project additional benchmarks for the 2009-2010 school year.

ACADEMIC VISION FOR LEIPSIC LOCAL SCHOOLS

Leipsic Local Schools will be one of the educational leaders in developing a rigorous Kindergarten through 16 school setting.

Rationale: We are not adding two years to any child's education but rather increasing the depth and quality of the existing academic program to encompass beginning college-level courses. We need to set higher expectations for all students and then provide the support to reach those expectations.

Documented Progress: All-day kindergarten was implemented for the 2008-09 school year, and it is a very positive change for students. Our first year of High School of Business has had a successful start, and we are looking forward to continued growth in the program. Dual Enrollment classes are available in United States History, Physics, and Intermediate Spanish. A Post-Secondary Educational Option class is offered through Rhodes State College.

Year Two Action Plan: Governor Strickland's Ohio Evidence-Based Model calls for universal all-day kindergarten. Since we instituted that change in 2008-09, Leipsic Local School District is prepared to continue our program. It is our hope to add senior English and a math course to our growing list of dual enrollment classes. This just makes sense as we move toward a K-16 world of seamless education. The challenge is to seek continuously those opportunities that "raise the bar" for all students.

Leipsic Local Schools will do its best to see that every student leaves the district with a career pathway.

Rationale: Starting in the junior high levels, we will work with students and their parents in setting a definite educational plan for each child throughout their high school career. No longer is it acceptable to graduate without any idea about future goals and objectives. Students will become familiar with the college-prep

programs such as High School of Business or math/science concentration, the Tech Prep classes such as Ag Business, and the Millstream opportunities.

Documented Progress: Mr. Boyd has been a definite asset as first year guidance counselor at Leipsic High School; however, he has had to spend all his time learning the basics of the position and has not had the opportunity to develop the junior high guidance component and the career pathways that are needed.

Year Two Action Plan: *Mr. Bute, Mr. Boyd, and I have discussed the need for a strong career guidance program in the 7th and 8th grades. Mr. Boyd will restructure his time next year to integrate some junior high classroom instruction in his schedule so that students begin high school with a four-year course selection plan based on a tentative career pathway. He will also find a way to involve parents in critical long-range planning. It is a shift in thinking; however, we have to help students have an “end in mind” before they become high school students. If Governor Strickland’s OEEM is implemented, a half time additional guidance counselor may be added to a district our size. There is no doubt that one guidance counselor struggles to meet the demands of a 7-12 building and little time can be devoted to the junior high and absolutely nothing can be done for the elementary students.*

Leipsic Local Schools will integrate technology across the curriculum.

Rationale: We need to better utilize technology into our content areas and shift away from the out-dated belief that technology is a content area in itself. Students and teachers understand that technology is a learning tool for content areas to be used across the curriculum.

Documented Progress: There has been definite progress in the realm of technology. We are in the process of completing the up-date for the Three year District Technology Plan. Progress Book will be put in place for the 2009-10 school year. We have moved away from hard copies to electronic copies in many areas including attendance and morning announcements. Elementary classroom teachers have given up one classroom computer each in order to have a total PC elementary lab. This was a much needed change. Keyboarding/Word Processing are skills being taught in grades 5,6,7, and 8; hence, this opens the door to other class offerings. We are hoping to introduce our first on-line class next fall.

Year Two Action Plan: *Tech Coordinator Brandon Schroth is a vital link as we make the transition to a new building and the technology infrastructure that will be part of it. As a district, we have to look at technology in a different way. It is no longer learning to use the computer, but rather using the computer as a tool to learn the class content. We also have to look at other forms of technology, ie. iPods, Blackberries, etc. and decide how these devices can impact teaching and learning.*

Leipsic Local Schools will better bridge the differences academically and culturally of its diverse population.

Rationale: We have not adequately focused on the how the individual child learns (learning styles) and what teaching methods (differentiated instruction) we might use to meet the needs of all children. This includes breaking down language as well as socio-economic barriers.

Documented Progress: While we have talked in broad terms about learning styles and teaching methods, it is difficult to determine the amount of progress, if any, that has been made. Cathy Hamilton did a full-day's professional development in August that centered on these two important ideas. The concern is whether we at the building and/or district level have adequately reinforced her message. Mrs. Gerten in her position with LEP, ESL and migrant education programs has made great strides in organizing and aligning these three programs properly.

Year Two Action Plan: *The administrative team will develop professional development and/or staff meetings that concentrate on learning styles and differentiated instruction throughout the 2009-10 school year. Possibly there can be a culminating activity at the end of the year that showcases progress made. It is our hope that the changes that have been made with Migrant Ed./ESL/LEP continue and expand. There is still such a need to provide some Hispanic cultural experiences to our students plus our staff across the grade levels needs to gain a positive appreciation for the diversity that is an integral part of the District.*

Leipsic students, staff and community will reflect a greater sense of pride and success in being part of this school system.

Rationale: The school is a vital part of this community and at times there seems to be little pride in who we are and what we accomplish. It is reflected in our actions, in our demeanor, and in our attitudes.

Documented Progress: Mr. Bute has made a definite difference in the atmosphere and attitude throughout the building. He is a "no nonsense" individual that students respect. It will take him this full school year to convey his theme of individual accountability to both students and staff, but strides are being made daily.

Year Two Action Plan: *This district will never be like most of our neighboring county schools, but we certainly have much for which to be proud and that is the attitude that we need to foster. All of us as a school district and community need to be positive about ourselves and work harder to project that positive demeanor as we represent our school district in all aspects of our school life.*