Our Commitment to **Every Student, Every Day**











2018-2023 Educational Strategic Plan:

Framework to Impact Student Learning

State College Area School District

The State College Area School District is proud of its tradition of academic excellence and service to the greater community. This long-standing record of achievement was built on continuous growth. We remain committed to the innovation and improvement of our programs, services, and supports for our students.

During the 2016-2017 school year, our district engaged in a representative planning process to help form our direction for the next six years. Seventy-two people — students, alumni, parents, teachers, support staff members, administrators, business/higher education partners, community representatives, district-level leaders, and every member of our school board – participated.

Throughout the process, we found the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan invaluable. It became both a foundation and a compass, providing a base for identifying the steps we've taken and guiding us where we need to improve. The steering team reviewed and analyzed student learning data, as well as feedback from student, parent, and teacher surveys; the surveys included our annual strategic plan survey, as well as the PA Youth Survey (PAYS). Penn State's Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Analysis (CEEPA) assisted us in evaluating our survey data to help us identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The steering team considered this information toward formulating our goals. Over the past three years, the district's areas of challenge have included: academic and opportunity gaps for students, student and teacher voice, communication and feedback, and student engagement.

Goal #1 - Engagement and Support for the Whole Student: Every student will have opportunities and advocates in a nurturing environment to develop self-awareness and healthy habits in order to be committed learners and respectful participants in their communities.

Goal #2 - Continuous Growth for Every Student: Every student will realize at least one year's growth in mathematics and literacy by the end of each school year.

Goal #3 - Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Problem Solving: Every student will take ownership in learning and be fully engaged in sharing his or her thinking as an interactive, innovative solution seeker.

Goal #4 - Closing Individual Achievement and Opportunity Gaps: Every underperforming student will progress at a pace that closes the learning and achievement gaps at an accelerated rate. Each student will realize access to desired curricular, co-curricular or extracurricular opportunities.

Goal #5 - Successful Transitions and Readiness for a Purposeful Life: Every student will effectively navigate the critical transitions in his or her schooling, and will graduate ready for success and personal fulfillment at the next level as an engaged community member.

To help accomplish these goals, we devised an instructional focus, or road map. It's built on our Four Pillars, our prime objectives:

- 1. Culture of Trust, Relationships, and Collaboration
- 2. Responsive Teaching and Learning
- 3. High Expectations for All
- 4. Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

The instructional focus encapsulates our ongoing commitment to strengthening teaching, leadership and organizational practices — the building blocks for continuous improvement of student learning.

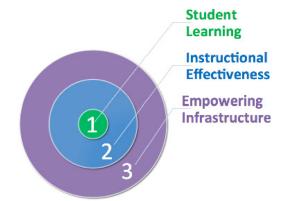
Ultimately, our schools are places where we learn from our successes as well as our failures. Through focused implementation, collaboration among stakeholders, and consistent attention to the professional practices outlined in this instructional focus document, our district will realize its core mission: To prepare every student for lifelong success through excellence in education.

Dr. Robert J. O'Donnell Superintendent of Schools

Placing Student Learning at the Center

For a strategic plan to live up to its promise, it must be based on a coherent design, assembled in the proper sequence. The components of such a plan and the order in which they must be put together are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Key Components of the Strategic Plan



- 1. Student Learning is the fundamental purpose of a school system. It is the centerpiece of its mission, the "end" from which its strategies, programs, structures and processes derive their meaning and relevance.
- 2. Instructional Effectiveness is the strongest predictor of student learning. Supported by effective leadership and organizational practices, learning occurs most powerfully at the intersection of student, teacher, and content.
- 3. Empowering Infrastructure must be created and sustained to support mission-focused decision making, strategy formulation, and focused action at every level of the organization. Providing efficient services and operations to support day-to-day functioning of the schools is a critical part of this infrastructure, particularly in areas such as educational services, human resources and talent development, fiscal and business services, facilities, and technology.



Goals for Student Success



Every student will have opportunities and advocates in a nurturing environment to develop self-awareness and healthy habits in order to be committed learners and respectful participants in their communities.

Continuous Growth for Every Student

Every student will realize at least one year's growth in mathematics and literacy by the end of each school year.

Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Problem-Solving

Every student will take ownership in learning and be fully engaged in sharing his or her thinking as an interactive, innovative solution seeker.

Closing Individual Achievement and Opportunity Gaps

Every underperforming student will progress at a pace that closes the learning and achievement gaps at an accelerated rate. Each student will realize access to desired curricular, co-curricular or extracurricular opportunities.

Successful Transitions and Readiness for A Purposeful Life Every student will effectively navigate the critical transitions in his or her schooling, and will graduate ready for success and personal fulfillment at the next level as an engaged community member.

Measures of Student Progress

(Benchmarks will be reported by student demographic subgroups)

- a. Percentage of students who report they feel engaged in school.
- b. Percentage of students who report they are treated with respect by members of the school community.
- c. Percentage of students in positive peer/group relationships.
- d. Percentage of students participating in at least one co-curricular, extracurricular or civic/community activity.
- e. Percentage of students who feel heard by educators (student voice).

a. TBD* (baseline identified in 2017-2018)

2023 Benchmarks

b. TBD* (baseline identified in 2017-2018)

- a. Percentage of students demonstrating at least one year's worth of growth in reading and math (annually).
- b. Percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade level-based writing expectations.
- a. By 2023, at least 90% of students in grades 1-8 will demonstrate a year or more of growth in math and reading (62% in reading and 59% in mathematics during spring 2017).
- b. By 2023, at least 90% of secondary students will demonstrate growth on end of unit assessments in English and mathematics.

Note: The key growth measure (MAP) is normative-based.

- a. Percentage of students who can justify a decision utilizing supporting evidence.
- b. Percentage of students who report being engaged in real-world interdisciplinary problems.
- c. Percentage of time students spend in collaborative learning experiences.
- d. Percentage of students who report they are engaged in challenging learning experiences at school.
- a. TBD* (baseline identified in 2017-2018)
- b. TBD* (baseline identified in 2017-2018)
- c. TBD* (baseline identified in 2017-2018)

- a. Percentage of students performing below grade level who demonstrate more than one year's academic growth in reading and mathematics (annually).
- b. Participation in advanced core courses mirrors the demographics of the student body.
- c. Percentage of students in each demographic subgroup attaining grade level reading and mathematics standards (economically disadvantaged, students with learning disabilities, racial/ethnic, English language learners).
- d. Percentage of students performing below grade level participating in at least one co-curricular, extracurricular or civic/community activity.
- a. By 2023, 70% of students performing at or below the 50th percentile in grades 1-8 will demonstrate more than one year's growth in reading and mathematics (2017: reading - 39% and mathematics - 33%).
- b. By 2023, 85% of students in demographic subgroups in grades 1-8 will meet grade level ELA and math standards and/or exceed one-year of growth.

- a. Percentage of primary students (K-2) meeting criteria for socialemotional and physical development.
- b. Percentage of students acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy skills by the end of second grade.
- c. Percentage of students experiencing a transition who report they feel connected to school.
- d. Percentage of high school students who complete courses and activities based on college and/or career interests.
- e. Graduation rates for all students and individual demographic student groups.
- f. Percentage of students participating in at least one community service project or civic action.

- a. By 2023, 95% of second grade students will possess foundational literacy and numeracy skills.
- b. By 2023, (TBD*) of students experiencing a transition will feel connected to school.
- c. By 2023, (TBD*) of high school students will complete courses and activities based on college and/or career interests.
- d. By 2023, State High students will attain a 97% four-year cohort graduation rate (93.84% in 2016-2017).
- * Data to be obtained via Strategic Plan Survey

Framing Our Essential Work

Our Five Aspirational Goals and Measures of Student Success articulate the outcomes we want for our students and the indicators of progress toward those outcomes. The goals and measures define the ends we desire. The means for accomplishing these ends are framed by the following.

1. Our Four Pillars are the building blocks of our professional practices; they frame what we must do well in every classroom throughout our school district to ensure success for every student, without exception.

Pillar #1 – Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration

Pillar #2 – Responsive Teaching and Learning

Pillar #3 – High Expectations for All

Pillar #4 – Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

- 2. Professional Practices for Instructional Effectiveness define the teaching, leadership and organizational practices deemed most necessary for effective instruction. Programs fade, but practices endure. Therefore, a common set of proven practices offers a consistency of approach, an economy of effort, and more opportunities for evidence-based collaboration system-wide.
- 3. Educational Strategies are proven or promising programs, initiatives or models that practitioners and schools can implement to achieve specific student learning outcomes. They are the continuous improvement undertakings which, when fully implemented, will facilitate the accomplishment of our five aspirational goals and measures of student success.



The Professional Practices for Instructional Effectiveness are focused on defining the teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices most essential for responsive instruction across our district. The practices outline the expectations for all SCASD staff and the standards by which we will be held accountable. The practices are organized around the Four Pillars.

Pillar 1

Pillar 2

Pillar 3

Pillar 4

Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration Responsive Teaching and Learning High Expectations for All Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

TEACHING PRACTICES

Teachers will use common planning time to address curriculum scope-and-sequence, assess student needs, reflect on instructional practice, and share ideas and strategies that work with each other.

Teachers and staff will communicate regularly with parents and students as equal partners in supporting students' education and well-being.

Through professional learning communities, teachers and staff will adapt curricular content, processes and products to support student readiness, interest and learning styles.

Teachers will utilize findings from multiple measures to inform and improve instruction, provide timely interventions and to promote a cycle of feedback with students.

Teachers and staff will establish continuous professional learning goals and seek out opportunities for growth and development.

Teachers and staff will communicate realistically high expectations for all students and ensure high student engagement in learning.

Teachers and staff will provide a safe and accepting classroom community that fosters each student's academic, emotional, and social well-being.

Teachers and staff will promote positive relationships, adopt strategies, and create opportunities to ensure all students feel connected to the school community.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

The leadership team will provide time, resources, and support to teachers regarding mindset and skills for effective collaboration.

The leadership team will demonstrate consistency and fairness to provide a structure for open communication that fosters collaborative partnering and shared decision-making.

The instructional leadership team will utilize data about student learning and professional practices to monitor implementation of schoolwide and grade-level/department continuous improvement plans.

The instructional leadership team will support teachers and collaborative teams through professional learning and differentiated supervision.

Principals will schedule and protect "sacred time" for staff instructional planning, data driven collaboration, and professional development.

Leadership will frequently emphasize in classrooms, staff meetings, all-school gatherings, and parent conferences that effective instruction and student learning are the highest priority for everyone.

Administrative team will annually assess and respond to data about school climate from students, parents, and school personnel.

Principal/administrative team will assure that every student is connected to a caring adult.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

School/district leadership will provide training and opportunities for staff, parents, and the community on collaborative partnering and shared decision-making.

School/district leadership will develop structures for regular one-and two-way communication among all partners in the teaching and learning community.

School/district leaders will allocate time for training, collegial collaboration and preparation for responsive teaching.

District and schools will use a data-informed cycle of inquiry that includes multiple measures to implement school-wide, grade level, and department continuous improvement plans.

The school/district will develop a cadre of school and district leaders who have attained mastery of core leadership practices and will facilitate the learning of other administrators and teachers.

School/district leaders will ensure that families and the community are aware of the schools' visions and expectations for learning. The district and community will build systems to link educators, students, parents, and caregivers to create a school climate that is safe, accepting, and caring.

The district and community will develop a system of supports to promote social, emotional, and academic growth for all members of the school.

Engagement and Support for the Whole Student

Pillar 1 Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration

1.1.1 Student participation in continuous school improvement Implement high-leverage, research-based classroom and inclusive school-wide improvement strategies that integrate cultural competency, diverse student voice, and active student participation in decision making.

1.1.2 Data collection and reporting systems

Create data collection and reporting systems to increase the effective use of data to inform instructional decisions at the district, classroom, school, and student levels.

Pillar 2 Responsive Teaching and Learning

1.2.1 Building on students' interests Stretch students' interests to find value in new topics and connect learning tasks to students' cultural backgrounds and personal aspirations.

1.2.2 Embracing student voice and responsibility

Create opportunities and expectations for diverse student voice and ownership by integrating students' knowledge, culture, and experience into school planning, instruction/projects, assessment, classroom norms, and restorative practices.



Goal #1: Engagement and Support for the Whole Student Every student will have opportunities and advocates in a nurturing environment to develop self-awareness and healthy habits in order to be committed learners and respectful participants in their communities. Educational Strategies are proven or promising programs, initiatives, or models that practitioners and schools can implement in order to achieve a specific student learning outcome.

Pillar 3 High Expectations for All

1.3.1 Monitoring student engagement and empowerment Conduct student and family forums and surveys to measure student engagement and empowerment (e.g. - focus groups, summits, advisories, fishbowls).

1.3.2 Measuring and analyzing data on student engagement

Ensure key pieces of user-friendly data pertaining to student engagement are available in a timely fashion at the district, school, and classroom levels.

1.3.3 Child/adolescent growth and development

Provide professional learning to increase staff capacity and understanding of adverse childhood experiences and child/adolescent growth and development.

1.3.4 Understanding differences of students' diversity

Strengthen staff understanding, through training, of the importance of collaborating with families to integrate the cultural knowledge and beliefs that students bring from home.

Pillar 4

Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

1.4.1 Social-emotional efficacy

Increase every student's social-emotional efficacy through partnering with parents, working with community-based organizations, teaching, modeling, and practicing social-emotional skills in support of a safe climate (e.g. - effective listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, personal reflection, responsibility, and decision making).

1.4.2 School-wide social-emotional supports

Ensure systems for social-emotional support are implemented school-wide; all staff and students are taught and provided with frequent feedback to implement with fidelity.

1.4.3 System-wide safety and security plan

Implement a system-wide safety plan.

1.4.4 Inclusive excellence

Afford opportunities for staff, students, families, and community to provide input regarding the inclusivity of the school and district climate (focus groups, summits, advisories, fishbowls).





Continuous Growth for Every Student

Pillar 1 Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration

2.1.1 Highly qualified, diverse staff Attract, develop and retain a highly qualified and more diverse workforce.

2.1.2 Professional learning Increase student engagement and performance by facilitating teachers' and leaders' mastery of instructional strategies, concepts, and culturally inclusive practices.

Pillar 2 Responsive Teaching and Learning

2.2.1 Responsible, respectful instruction

- Implement culturally inclusive instructional practices that focus on engaging students with meaningful tasks.
- Provide strong early-literacy foundations and continuous literacy and language supports in all content areas across all grade levels.

2.2.2 Diverse Learning Provide differentiated instruction that recognizes diverse learning needs.

2.2.3 Professional learning communities of practice Implement professional learning communities to support effective teaching practices, deeper content knowledge, and collaborative inquiry focused on student learning.



Goal #2: Continuous Growth for Every Student Every student will realize at least one year's growth in mathematics and literacy by the end of each school year.

Educational Strategies are proven or promising programs, initiatives, or models that practitioners and schools can implement in order to achieve a specific student learning outcome.

Pillar 3 High Expectations for All

2.3.1 Differentiated teaching and learning

Ensure all teachers differentiate teaching to provide the right balance of challenge and attainability for each student.

2.3.2 Expectation for positive learning climate

Establish a universal standard for a positive and inclusive learning climate in every school that makes students feel valued, challenged, and supported.

Pillar 4 Welcoming, Safe, and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

2.4.1 Inclusive practices

Embrace diversity and foster culturally inclusive practices. Provide training and revise policies to support safe, respectful environments and equitable enforcement of disciplinary procedures.

2.4.2 Communication

Engage in ongoing communication between school and home.



Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Problem-Solving

Pillar 1 Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration

3.1.1 Project-based learning professional development Provide access to resources that engage school staff in learning more about project-based learning, including identifying organizations and professional materials that guide best practices for effective implementation.

3.1.2 Planning time for student centered learning

Provide time for teacher teams/departments to collaborate on the development of projects that support critical thinking and problem solving.

3.1.3 Cross-grade and/or department collaboration Implement cross-department and grade level teams in using common approaches to critical thinking and problem solving.

Pillar 2 Responsive Teaching and Learning

- 3.2.1 Student-centered learning Acquire and adapt authentic, respectful tasks that foster teamwork, goal setting, reflection, and critical thinking.
- 3.2.2 Student-directed learning Support and facilitate student-directed communication, collaboration, and problem solving.
- 3.2.3 Team collaboration/ professional learning communities Support teacher teams in collaborating within grades and departments to plan and use assessments that foster and elicit student critical thinking and problem solving.



Goal #3: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Problem Solving

Every student will take ownership in learning and be fully engaged in sharing his or her thinking as an interactive, innovative solution seeker.

Educational Strategies are proven or promising programs, initiatives, or models that practitioners and schools can implement in order to achieve a specific student learning outcome.

Pillar 3 High Expectations for All

3.3.1 Repository of resources Build a repository of resources and community organizations able and willing to support critical thinking and problem-based learning within the schools and the district.

3.3.2 Experiential learning Promote experiential learning throughout the district to enhance student confidence in sharing ideas and taking risks.

3.3.3 Real-world learning experiences

Plan, develop, and implement curricular, noncurricular and extracurricular experiences that support real-world learning.

Pillar 4 Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

3.4.1 Problem-solving opportunities Sponsor problem-solving events where teams of students can exhibit and share how they have solved real-world problems, based in the community, across multiple academic disciplines supported by local businesses and civic groups.

3.4.2 Expressing diverse perspectives

Provide professional development that promotes classroom strategies which encourage creative thinking, foster effective communication skills, and build classroom environments supporting the expression of different cultural points of view.



Closing Individual Achievement and Opportunity Gaps

Pillar 1 Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration

4.1.1 Highly qualified, diverse staff Attract, develop and retain a highly qualified and more diverse workforce.

4.1.2 Developing positive staffstudent relationships

Provide all-staff training and ongoing support for developing positive relationships and addressing underlying causes of students' behavior.

4.1.3 Cultural competence
Strengthen cultural competence of
teachers, leaders and staff through
professional development experiences
focused on working with students from
diverse backgrounds (ethnicity, language,
socioeconomics).



Pillar 2 Responsive Teaching and Learning

4.2.1 Easy-to-understand data reports

Provide easy access to a data management system that consolidates data from multiple sources (e.g. - formative and diagnostic assessments, state assessments, teacher grades, disciplinary referrals, attendance, vital signs of student learning and professional practices) into easy-to-understand, timely reports that educators use to monitor and adjust professional practices to improve student learning.

4.2.2 Early literacy and mathematics instruction

Identify the needs of students and teachers early and implement targeted practices that support early literacy and mathematics success for under-performing students and struggling schools.

4.2.3 Personalized learning

Create an individualized learning plan for every student that includes differentiated instruction, assessment, intervention, and out-of-school time strategies in order to strengthen student ownership and engagement and incorporate the prior knowledge, learning styles and cultural background of students in day-to-day instructional practices.

Goal #4: Closing Individual Achievement and Opportunity Gaps Every underperforming student will progress at a pace that closes the learning and achievement gaps at an accelerated rate. Each student will realize access to desired curricular, co-curricular or extracurricular opportunities.

Educational Strategies are proven or promising programs, initiatives, or models that practitioners and schools can implement in order to achieve a specific student learning outcome.

Pillar 3 High Expectations for All

4.3.1 Intervention system Ensure that the teaching and learning system supports appropriate interventions that are timely and effective.

4.3.2 Feedback on student growth Implement assessment tools to provide feedback on student growth and to inform teaching practices.

4.3.3 Equitable hiring and allocation of staff

Institute need-based, results-focused placement of staff matched to school-level needs, and ensure openness and transparency.



Pillar 4 Welcoming, Safe, and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

4.4.1 Culturally inclusive practices Create a safe climate that embraces diversity and fosters culturally inclusive practices.

4.4.2 Safe and respectful learning environments

Demonstrate a commitment to students' socio-emotional and academic success by fostering attitudes and behaviors that affirm an appreciation of cultural differences and are free of bias, ridicule, and intimidation.

4.4.3 Adult mentors nurturing student sense of belonging Build an adult mentor program that engages individual students and adult mentors in nurturing a sense of belonging and appropriate conduct, validating their social and cultural identities ("identity safety"), and empowering each student to construct narratives that foster personal leadership, academic growth and social action (e.g., Men of Color and My Brother's Keeper initiatives).

4.4.4 Positive support network for students and families

Provide a positive support network for all stakeholders with a seamless web of safety nets by adopting a community-wide "whatever it takes" attitude.

Successful Transitions and Readiness for a Purposeful Life

Pillar 1 Culture of Trust, Relationships and Collaboration

5.1.1 Effective strategies and resources

Connect parents, teachers, leaders, and staff to curricular and community resources for facilitating academic and social-emotional growth of all students.

5.1.2 Highly qualified, diverse staff Attract, develop, and retain a highly qualified and more diverse workforce.

Pillar 2 Responsive Teaching and Learning

5.2.1 Developmentally appropriate assessments

Acquire and use a developmentally appropriate formative and summative assessment system that aligns with the standards for literacy, numeracy, social-emotional skills, and physical skills.

5.2.2 Understanding students Create an environment that ensures every student is known by name and is instructed based on their strengths and needs.



Goal #5: Successful Transitions and Readiness for a Purposeful Life

Every student will effectively navigate the critical transitions in his or her schooling, and will graduate ready for success and personal fulfillment at the next level as an engaged community member.

Educational Strategies are proven or promising programs, initiatives, or models that practitioners and schools can implement in order to achieve a specific student learning outcome.

Pillar 3 High Expectations for All

5.3.1 Data dashboard and personalized learning Create a data dashboard to inform the public of district departments and schools performances.

5.3.2 Flexible master schedule Ensure that master schedules provide flexibility for students to pursue their interests.

5.3.3 Community engagement Develop and execute a systematic program to collect actionable feedback from the community to inform district-wide programming and practices.

Pillar 4 Welcoming, Safe, and Inclusive Climate for Learning and Work

5.4.1 Preschool articulation

Meet regularly with preschool providers and families to ensure that they are equipping students with the knowledge and skills for successful transition into kindergarten.

5.4.2 Parent education and communication Provide ongoing information to parents and caregivers about developmentally appropriate language, math, and social-emotional growth for their children.

5.4.3 Mentors for student transitions Create a mentor system that engages students in transitioning between grades and keeps them on track for graduation.

5.4.4 Community/work-based experiences for students

Provide every student with community experiences and/or work-based internships prior to graduating from high school.



Board of Directors

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Mr. Vernon Bock, Asst. Superintendent for Elementary Education

Dr. Wilbur Stout, Asst. Superintendent for Secondary Education

Mr. Randy Brown, Finance and Operations Officer

Ms. Linda Pierce, Director of Human Resources





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By the Numbers

6,768 students

8% Asian

2% Black/African American

3% Hispanic/Latino

5% Multiracial

81% White

17% Economically Disadvantaged

3% English Language Learners

11% Special Education

13 Schools

- 9 Elementary Schools
- 2 Middle Schools
- 1 High School with Career & Technical Center
- 1 Delta Program (grades 5-12)

20:1 - Average student-to-teacher ratio for K-5 classrooms

23:1 - Average student-to-teacher ratio for grades 6-8 classrooms

Points of Pride

- 1 National Merit Scholarship recipient in 2017, 12 finalists
- 1 U.S. Presidential Scholar in 2017, four since 2010
- 1 U.S. National Linguistics Team member in 2017
- 1 U.S. National Physics Team member in 2016
- 2 Young Arts national winners in 2016
- 23 National AP Scholars in 2017
- 24th State High's ranking out of 650 high schools in Pennsylvania for 2015 SAT scores
- U.S. News and World Report 2017 ranks State High in the top 8 percent of 686 high schools in Pennsylvania
- District 12-time National Association of Music Merchants Best Communities for Music Education award recipient
- State High 3-time Grammy
 Signature School award recipient