



Goals



- Create a group of well-informed advocates for Eden Prairie Schools
- Engage, and foster positive sentiments among, empty nesters and those who may be critical
- Continue community engagement efforts and demonstrate interest in involving and informing the broader EP community

With inspiration from...



Overview

- 37 applications for 25 seats
- 7 monthly required sessions, 3 hours each
 - Broad range of district operations, with sessions led by various department leaders
 - Authentic & personalized learning focus — minimal “sit and get”
- Additional optional opportunities



Required Sessions



Session 1: Program Orientation & District Bus Tour

Session 2: Teaching and Learning

Session 3: Safety, Facilities & Nutrition

Session 4: Finance, Marketing & Human Resources

Session 5: Beyond K-12

Session 6: Transportation

Session 7: Role of the School Board & Cohort 1 Graduation



Measuring success

- Session feedback forms and debrief meetings
- Pre- and post-program surveys:
 - 11 items measuring knowledge/confidence in answering questions about district operations (how we keep students safe, budget, hire, transport, what students learn, etc.)
 - 6 items measuring engagement and advocacy
 - 14 items measuring overall perceptions, trust and support, including Morris Leatherman questions





Cohort members' knowledge of session topics increased by an average of 83%.

Survey highlights

Knowledge-related items showed some of the largest gains, especially:

- “How we manage facilities and their public availability” (+104%)
- “How we determine menus and feed students” (+160%)
- “How we create a budget and allocate resources” (+155%)
- “Recruiting, hiring and retaining staff” (+142%)





Cohort members' frequency of engagement & advocacy increased by an average of 30%.

Survey highlights

Advocacy and engagement measures also improved significantly:

- Conversing with neighbors about the district (+38%)
- Conversing with friends about the district (+34%)
- Correcting misinformation online (+33%)
- Advocating on behalf of the district (+26%)
- Conversing with strangers about the district (+20%)





Cohort members' overall perceptions and trust increased by an average of 13%.

Program impact

- Overall perception/trust items were already high pre-program, so those showed smaller percentage gains.
- Largest gains:
 - "I am familiar with the district's budget and understand where district funding comes from" (+57%)
 - "When it comes to Eden Prairie Schools, I consider myself an informed citizen" (+28%)
 - "I feel like I have the information I need about the school district to be an informed voter" (+28%)





Participants' overall
knowledge of Eden
Prairie Schools
increased by 66%.

Looking to next year

- Retreat this summer with cohort representatives to review feedback and recommend minor adjustments
- Application opens late summer
- Planning for first session in October



Thank you!

Appendix includes more data,
session subjects, leaders and
participant takeaways.



Session Subjects, Leaders and Participant Takeaways



Session 1: Program Orientation & District Bus Tour



Met: Dr. Josh Swanson,
Superintendent; Cabinet
Members; CMS, EPHS and Cedar
Ridge Principals

- Program orientation
- Superintendent welcome
- Pre-program survey
- Bus tour
- Scavenger hunt

Cohort's key takeaways:

1. District and school leaders are high-quality, committed and have a strong vision
2. City and school district collaborate well
3. Community members utilize our buildings

Session 2: Teaching and Learning

Met: Dr. Robb Virgin, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education; Felicia Thames, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Learning & Innovation Leadership Team (Ethan Dado, Tina Moses, Angie Fitzgibbons, Lisa Birno, Amy Peterson)



- Learned about the district's approach to teaching & learning
- Observed classrooms
- Create a substitute teaching plan

Cohort's key takeaways:

1. "Each student is truly cared for and met where they are. Each student gets the necessary support and instruction needed to effectively grow."
2. "The many aspects of intentionality in providing for all needs of all students. The high standards of EP education."
3. "Teamwork from everyone in the district to ensure standards are met and each kid is leaving better than how they started."

Demonstrated Increase in Knowledge & Positive Sentiments

- How confident are you that you could answer a question with accurate information about the following topic areas related to Eden Prairie Schools?
 - What students are learning in school: **32% increase**
- Please rate your agreement with the following:
 - I'm familiar with the district's curriculum and understand what's being taught in classrooms: **14% increase**
 - Eden Prairie Schools offers a high-quality education: **5% increase**
 - Eden Prairie Schools prepares students for success after graduation: **6% increase**



Session 3: Safety, Facilities & Nutrition



Met: Kyle Fisher, Director of Facilities, Safety & Grounds; Brenda Boehm, Director of Nutrition Services; Dr. Jaysen Anderson, EPHS Principal; EP Fire Chief Scott Gerber; EPPD leaders

- Learned about school breakfast and lunch programs, nutrition standards
- Toured the kitchen and bakery
- Ate a school lunch
- Emergency management tabletop with EPPD & EPFD

Cohort's key takeaways:

1. "Understanding nutritional planning and execution and how much is actually made by EP is amazing."
2. "The restrictions/requirements the USDA places on the lunch program."
3. "Relationships are key for a safe school community."
4. "Wonderful partnerships with community emergency teams; there is a lot that goes into our emergency response, more than I ever thought of before."

Demonstrated Increase in Knowledge

How confident are you that you could answer a question with accurate information about the following topic areas related to Eden Prairie Schools?

- How we keep students safe at school: 38% increase
- How we manage facilities and their public availability: 104% increase
- How we determine menus and feed students: 160% increase



Session 4: Finance, Marketing & Human Resources

Met: Tom May, Executive Director of HR; Dirk Tedmon, APR, Executive Director of MarComm; Jason Mutzenberger, Executive Director of Business Services; Josh Axtman, EPEA President, and teams



- Learned about
 - Relationship of the EPEA and the district
 - Hiring practices
 - Strategic marketing and its importance
- Built a school district budget

Cohort's key takeaways:

1. "Learning how complex budgeting is."
2. "The amount of feedback from community that influences how EP proceeds forward."
3. "Timely, sophisticated marketing effort, very strategic."
4. "Hiring standards are highly rigorous."
5. "Everything relies on enrollment."
6. "The number of unions to support staff."

Demonstrated Increase in Knowledge & Advocacy

- How confident are you that you could answer a question with accurate information about the following topic areas related to Eden Prairie Schools?
 - How we create a budget and allocate resources: **155% increase**
 - How and why we communicate with stakeholders and market our schools: **75% increase**
 - Our processes for recruiting, hiring and retaining staff: **142% increase**
- Please rate your agreement with the following:
 - I am familiar with the district's budget and understand where district funding comes from: **57% increase**
- How often do you:
 - Engage in conversation with strangers about EP Schools: **20% increase**
 - Engage in conversation with friends about EP schools: **34% increase**
 - Engage in conversation with neighbors about EP schools: **38% increase**
 - Advocate on behalf on EP Schools: **26% increase**
 - Correct misinformation you see online: **33% increase**



Session 5: Beyond K-12



Met: Dr. Shawn Hoffman-Bram, Executive Director of Community Education; Krista Konopa, Director of Youth Programs; Tiffany Grams and Mary Bartusek, Early Learning Coordinators, and team

- Experienced
 - Eagle Zone
 - Eagle Express
 - Early Childhood Screening
 - EPIC Camp planning
- Learned about
 - Facilities rental
 - CommEd funding streams
 - Many CommEd programs

Cohort's key takeaways:

1. "Community Ed is extensive, and funding for this is limited."
2. "Multi-faceted approach to reach edge cases."
3. "The complexity of scheduling."
4. "Activity bus to learn on the go."
5. "Impressed with the resources directed to meet people where they are."
6. "There are so many awesome opportunities for families and children; resources & enrichment."

Demonstrated Increase in Knowledge

- How confident are you that you could answer a question with accurate information about the following topic areas related to Eden Prairie Schools?
 - How we manage facilities and their public availability: 104% increase
 - How we provide lifelong learning through Community Education: 57% increase
- Please rate your agreement with the following:
 - I feel connected with EP Schools: 57% increase



Session 6:

Transportation

Met: Bryan Barnhart, Director of Transportation; Ryan Quinn, Transportation Coordinator, and team



- Rode a middle school bus route
- Learned about
 - The fleet
 - Our drivers
 - Routing
 - Student behavior support
 - Dispatch
- Saw a pre-trip inspection
- Visited the bus garage

Cohort's key takeaways:

1. "Level of training and preventative maintenance that goes into taking care of each bus."
2. "Strategic practices and principles seem well integrated with district's values and objectives."
3. "Bus drivers are dedicated and take an interest in the kids and their wellbeing."
4. "Safety is top of mind."
5. "Being a bus driver might not be a bad retirement gig."

Demonstrated Increase in Knowledge

How confident are you that you could answer a question with accurate information about the following topic areas related to Eden Prairie Schools?

- How we keep students safe at school:
38% increase
- How we transport students to and from school: 30% increase



Session 7: Role of the School Board

Met: Aaron Casper, School Board Chair; Abby Libsack, School Board Vice Chair

- Participated in a mock School Board onboarding session
- Learned about
 - Board governance
 - Eligibility
 - Time commitment
 - Commitment to community
 - Stipends
- Graduated



Cohort's key takeaways:

1. "Board function and way of working, Superintendent role and accountability."
2. "School Board invites and listens to children and community members."
3. "The Governance Model vs. the Operational Model, I had not paid attention to this earlier."
4. "The State regulations that Board Members need to follow."

Demonstrated Increase in Knowledge

- How confident are you that you could answer a question with accurate information about the following topic areas related to Eden Prairie Schools?
 - The role of the Eden Prairie School Board: **50% increase**
- Please rate your agreement with the following:
 - I trust the EP School Board to do what is right for children: **10% increase**
 - When it comes to Eden Prairie Schools, I consider myself an informed citizen: **28% increase**

