

August 26th letter to the Quakertown Community School District Board of School Directors by Dr. William E. Harner, Superintendent

As I complete my 9th year in Quakertown, and begin my 10th year this coming January, I wanted to share some of the things that we in the Quakertown Community School District have accomplished together. Most of you on the Board were watching our work from a distance or did not have your children in our schools yet when I was appointed. A couple of you have asked that we share our story from my two terms of service as your superintendent. You can all see from my reflection we have been really busy creating an awesome school district. It all came about because of the wonderful team QCSD has been able to build over the years and the hard work that goes on in schools and classrooms every day. Thank you in advance for reading.

Executive Summary

In the prior nine years, the following improvements to the District have been realized:

Area	From	To
Goals & Talent	Half-page goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, detailed, action planning process was implemented. Built a bench of strong talent – including implementing the Teacher on Special Assignment program. Over 90% of the district’s principals and assistant principals have completed or enrolled in a doctoral program
College Ready	18% of QCHS graduates college ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now, 38% college ready when 50% QCHS grads enter a 4 yr college QCHS’s average SAT scores increased by 110 points AP Scholars rose from 62 to 147 per year Parents reimbursed \$199K for student success on AP exams over past six years
Curriculum Refresh	Hit or miss, Ad Hoc	Every content area reviewed every 6 years, all curriculum accessible to parents via Atlas
Pre-K	None	Pre-K + Head Start (4 classes - 60 students)
Full Day K	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 schools in 2014 Every elementary school at least 1 section in 2015 Universal FDK in 2022
Guidance	0.5 FTE per	Doubled to 1.0 FTE per elementary building, 2.0 in

Counselors	elementary building	larger elementary buildings
Gifted/high ability students	Pullout program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started Elementary Reading and Math Plus Started Middle School Honors and World Language programs Added 14 Advanced Placement courses and Capstone Diploma Program Twenty four 9th graders in PreCalc Fall 2022
Music		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added music staff Doubled the number of students involved in music by adding a strings program. Bolstered the quality of the program by investing in instruments and equipment.
Dance	–	Added dance program
Culinary Arts	–	Added a wildly popular Culinary program
World Languages		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started World Languages at the Middle Schools German, Mandarin, Spanish Added Advanced Placement and Mandarin classes at the High School
Advanced Placement	From 15 APs at HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2014 Opened AP to 9th and 10th Now 29 AP courses at the HS
US News & World Report's Best High School Silver Award		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every year since 2015 Local realtors are advertising the Quakertown's high quality public schools
Career Ready		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Upper Bucks Tech to 9th graders in 2014 and now 52% of the 9th graders want to attend in 2022 Career Pathways for 9-12 Career Planning for K-8
The Academy at Quakertown		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started The Academy to help with alternative education 82 TAQ grads in the last 4 years.
Athletics	19% win rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinvested in athletics to boost morale and self image of students Built two turf fields We now have a much higher win rate with several new sports programs Quakertown is now a sports Mecca and a destination for league, district and regional competitions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnered with Richland Township to use RASA Fields by building their bathroom facilities ● Partnered with Quakertown Borough for using Memorial Park Field ● Used my presence to be a motivational force for the athletes and teams.
Communications	Virtually non-existent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Omnipresent and always available. ● Use social media and Super blogs ● Redesigned website ● Began recording board meetings in 2017 to boost transparency, expanding to live streaming ● Conducted numerous parent committees to inform Board decision making
Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Growth-oriented supervision model ● Have not furloughed a single teacher ● Maintained a collaborative stance during the trying times of COVID to keep schools open
Fiscal Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Found \$3.5MM of expenses that could be cut in his first few months as superintendent. ● Fund Balance grown from \$12.5M to \$28M ● Implemented Forecast5 software to enable modeling future budgets ● Introduced zero-based budgeting ● Kept bargaining agreements below or at Act 1 index ● Improved bussing model, saving \$650K starting in 2014/15 ● Clean audits
Taxes	Avg. 5.3% prior 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avg at 2% 2015-2022 ● First-ever 0% tax increases
Facilities	Many fell into disrepair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established a \$1MM routine maintenance line item in the budget ● Initiated the Facilities Master Plan with parent involvement ● Supervised HS and Neidig Renovations ● Implemented physical security measures
Safety	No real policies to speak of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed a robust safety culture ● Began the SRO program in 2015, adding Richland in 2017 ● Initiated ALICE ● Completed risk and vulnerability assessments for all buildings

Government		Established numerous opportunities to interact with Harrisburg and local municipalities.
Technology & Data		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluated original tools and switched to Canvas and SeeSaw and eliminated Bridges (saving \$800K) • Implemented various data warehouse and analysis systems • Established a stellar 1:1 laptop program

The Details:

Culture

In mid-February 2014, during my first meeting with the Administrative leadership team, frustration and low morale were the key themes. Tears were shed by a few principals in the room. After well over two hours of listening to their concerns, I asked who was considering leaving the district. Every single hand popped up in the room. Principals expressed a years-long distrust of the Board and a schism between the Board, the administrative team, and teachers. Secondary teachers were especially frustrated with Standards-Based Grading. Support staff/QESPA morale was also at a low. Four months before I became the substitute superintendent the district outsourced food service management and custodial services. My work was cut out for me!

Building strong, high-performing, teams is what I love to do. We have done just that!

Our vision was to create a school community through transformational leadership that is data-driven and student-centered with a culture of high expectations and performance, fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability. To keep it simple I expressed our work ahead as the three A's - Academics, Arts, and Athletics, with a Theory of Action as a roadmap for becoming the best. To do that we:

- Re-engaged with the community and provided opportunities to hear from parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders.
- Addressed community concerns about the 'open area' student assignment process controlled by Levy Bus, e.g. for decades K-8 students school building assignments could vary where a student might attend 3-4 elementary schools in six years; feedback by parents my first night in the district was the impetus for the first of many Parent Committees - Elementary Redistricting.
- Replaced compliance-oriented formulaic teacher evaluation system with a growth-oriented supervision model that focuses on coaching and feedback for professional growth, now in its eighth year of implementation
- Extended the growth-oriented supervision model to Act 93 administrators.

- Implemented Panorama student perception surveys twice yearly to gather data about the student experience for teacher and administrator action planning.
- Implemented Positive Behavior Support programs at all levels, a multi-year effort that continues today
- Created [MLK Day of Service](#) opportunities for service
- Addressed student and staff needs in the aftermath of the pandemic, increasing counseling support and implementing Caring School Communities.

Academics

In January of 2014, I found that only the Physical Education Department had a curriculum in place. No process was in place to systematically develop, review, and approve the curriculum on a regular basis. A comprehensive formative assessment approach was also missing. This omission was telling. The results of a Class of 2013 senior survey taken right before graduation indicated the vast majority felt that they were not prepared for college. This was substantiated by QCHS's Naviance postsecondary education data. It also matched the College Board's predictive data that showed that **only 18% of our graduates were college ready and completing four-year programs**. In 2014, there were limited opportunities for our high-achieving students. Standards-based grading, which attempted to separate grades for content mastery from grades for soft skills, was deeply unpopular.

Our vision and matching Theory of Action was to create a K12 environment in which (1) we have a guaranteed and viable curriculum in place in every content area, (2) we expand opportunities for high-achieving students while maintaining the long-standing commitment to support students with academic needs, and (3) expand parent involvement by providing access to their child's curriculum and formative assessment data throughout the year. Our graduates would be college and career ready.

Curriculum

- Developed curriculum for every academic department and program
- Created the Six-Year Curriculum Cycle to insure periodic review of all content areas and predictable budgetary needs
- Implemented [Atlas Curriculum Management System](#) to transparently share all curriculum and resources with parents
- Assistant Superintendent for OTL (Dr. Hoffman) was selected as [PA Curriculum Administrator of the Year](#)

Pre-K

- Started two sections of the Pre-K Counts program with PA grant funding, serving up to 30 students per year at no cost to the District or to the parents, partnering with LifeSpan
- Started three sections of the Head Start Pre-K Program with federal funding, serving up to 45 students per year at no cost to the District or to the parents, partnering with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit

Elementary

- Piloted developmental Full-Day Kindergarten program in two elementary schools to provide a full day experience for our neediest students (2014-15)
- Expanded the developmental FDK program to the remaining elementary schools so every building had one section (2015-16)
- Started Universal Full-Day Kindergarten in three elementary schools using excess FTEs to phase in cost (2021-22)
- Completed transition to Universal Full-Day Kindergarten for all students (2022-23)
- Doubled the number of guidance counselors (.5 FTE per building to 1.0 FTE)
- Started Reading Plus and Math Plus programs in all elementary schools to meet the needs of gifted and high achieving students - leading to compacted and HS math courses at the middle school level
- Developed and implemented new elementary special area courses in Elementary Spanish and Digital Literacy
- Doubled the number of students in instrumental music by adding strings instruction
- Started summer camps for remedial learning for post-K2 and for fun
- One of elementary principals was selected as the PA Principal of the Year and teaches principal leadership for state's PIL program

Middle School

- Started World Language program (Spanish, German, Mandarin) to provide Level I (and later Level II) language courses for all eighth graders reading on grade level and for selected seventh and sixth grade students
- Started [Honors Math](#) and Honors RELA with compacted math, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II courses, e.g. in 2021-22 Algebra I - 11 sixth graders and 94 seventh graders Geometry - 119 eighth graders; in 2022-23, 24 ninth graders are taking Pre-Calculus Honors creating Advanced Placement and dual college credit opportunities for them later while in high school
- Started the middle school component of Project Lead The Way
- Partnered with committed community members to start a middle school musical, which is now an annual event led by our middle school choral director
- Added strings instruction to the middle school instrumental music program
- Added dance programming

High School

- Opened Advanced Placement to 9th & 10th graders (2014-15), e.g. Human Geography, World History, Psychology, and Seminar, e.g. this year 80 of 437 ninth graders are in AP HuG;
- AP HuG teacher was nominated and recognized as the PA Social Studies Teacher of the Year for her students' performance the first year with offered the course
- Started Advanced Placement [Summer Boot Camp for rising 9th graders](#) in 2021
- Added 14 Advanced Placement courses to the high school, doubling the number to 29
- Added the AP Capstone Diploma program with AP Seminar & AP Research

- Implemented reimbursement program for AP exams passed to expand opportunities for college credit to all students regardless of income; refunding \$119K for exam costs to parents since 2017
- Earned the College Board's Silver Award recognition every year for QCHS since 2015
- Between 2014 and 2019 QCHS's average SAT score rose by 110 points
- Expanded Project Lead the Way course offerings to include Environmental Sustainability and Cyber Security
- Utilized the skills and interest of staff to build a robust [Future Business Leaders of America \(FBLA\) program](#) winning statewide competitions and honors
- Created the conditions that changed the perception of attending Upper Bucks County Technical School by starting to offer enrollment to ninth-grade students in 2014; by 2022, enrollment 9th grade enrollment requests jumped from 17% in its first year to 52% of rising ninth graders this year
- As the Upper Bucks County Technical School Superintendent of Record from 2018 to 2020, utilized QCSD's HR, Business Office, and OTL expertise to support personnel, business, curriculum decision making, and trained instructors in legal responsibilities for English Language Learners and students with IEPs; brought in partner district colleagues to collaborate with curriculum and finance
- Developed and implemented The Academy at Quakertown to meet the needs of students who needed an alternative school environment; 82 TAQ high school graduates in four years
- Developed and implemented [Career Pathways](#) for grades 9-12 and career planning for grades K-8

Special Education and Pupil Services

- Doubled the number of elementary school-based counselors - to one per school (now two each at Neidig and Pfaff)
- Leveraged Bucks County assets by placing additional [SAP counselors](#) in school
- Leveraged partnership with the Lehigh Valley Hospital System for mental health professional services at no cost to the district (2022-23)
- Provided numerous parent workshops from drug abuse to mental health
- Provided expert counsel during COVID regarding Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) that resulted in not a single due process hearing or claim

Arts (Performing and Visual)

For decades, QCSD was well known for its concert, jazz, marching band, and choral music programs. With that insight, shortly after I arrived, I asked to meet with the high school instrumental and choral directors to determine what they needed to make their programs even better. I took along with me the business manager. We learned they were in desperate need of new instruments, equipment, and significant changes to the High School Renovation Plan.

Our vision was to build on the success of QCSD's arts program by providing more opportunities and financial support. Data showed Quakertown students who participate in one of the performing arts programs academically outperform by three quarters of a grade those who do not. Additionally, we would use the resources of the HS Renovation Project to have teachers design and create Visual and Culinary Arts Studios.

- Results from my February 2014 meeting with Frank Parker and Jonathan Lechner.
 - The redesign of the High School Performing Arts Center to include a new “shell” to optimize choral performances on the stage and to expand the stage floor and redesign it to be usable for dance, and
 - Funding for new and additional band instruments in excess of \$750K (2014-22)
- Included a classroom designed as a Dance Studio into the high school renovation and started a dance program at the high school and at Strayer Middle School
- Added strings instruction and now Orchestra to the instrumental music program, now involving more than 350 students, K-12 with three music teachers
- Sustained the 4-12 Band program music teacher staffing while experiencing a 700 student population decline
- Began to offer middle and high school spring musical performances every year versus every other year
- Started a Culinary Arts class that is the most requested elective in QCHS, 390 student requests its 1st year

Athletics

In early 2014, parents brought to my attention that QCHS athletic teams had a 19% win percentage, meaning that four out of five times our students stepped into competition onto a field or into a gym, they lost. Athletic facilities were in gross need of repair and/or they were dirt, gravel or mud fields. QCHS was built on a swamp and our athletes paid the price. Panther Pride was extremely low. There was little district investment in our athletic programming nor understanding the importance of sports competition to school culture.

Our vision was to deliberately use **Athletics** as one of several vehicles to [change students' perception and vision of themselves](#). It was critically important in the creation of a high performance culture and Quakertown as a destination for high quality athletic facilities and competitive teams. Personal superintendent presence and involvement of the district's leadership team would role model and emphasize the importance of **Athletics**.

Panther sports is a success story where our fans, especially at [Friday Night Lights](#) and Wrestling - both home and away - dominate the competition and offer great venues for competition. Quakertown now has top notch athletic facilities that draw outside teams and groups to Quakertown (in-season and off season), benefitting the school district, local businesses, and the community as a whole. While in season, Quakertown student-athletes academically outperformed those who do not by half a grade.

- Have been omnipresent at local, district, regional and state competitions
- Directly supervise the Athletic Director to signify the importance of sports to the district
- Actively participate in the selection of coaches; established expectations for year-round coach involvement in programs, in adding new sports, and in developing middle school and community feeder programs
- Turfed Alumni Field
- Built the Visitor Locker Room and new QMPO Concession Stand at Alumni Field
- Secured a community partner donation for a \$175K scoreboard for Alumni Field at no cost to the District
- Built the QNB Field, including Concession Stand/Bathroom Building and Marching Band conductor stand
- Developed multiple options for Board consideration for a [Varsity Baseball Field](#)
- Started the Boys Lacrosse program
- Started the Boys & Girls Varsity Bowling program
- Started the Afterschool Speed & Agility and Strength Training programs
- Started an [eSports Team](#) 2021-22
- Started Live Streaming varsity sports competitions

Systems Thinking and Leader Development

In January 2014, Quakertown had disconnected, redundant, and non-aligned staff agencies that worked in silos. It also had to look outside the district for all of its administrative staff hirings. The Comprehensive Plan (then called the Strategic Plan) had just been approved and submitted in the fall of 2013. I found its goals to be limited. The Superintendent's Goals fit on less than half of one page of paper and did not provide a road map for achieving academic excellence nor fiscal responsibility. Additionally, the Board directed me to train and prepare Ms Edwards, the new Assistant Superintendent, to become the superintendent should I leave.

Three areas I immediately identified for improvement were the development of leadership capacity within the school district, creating a detailed Superintendent Goals and Action Planning Process, and doing a deep dive into how the district financial resources were being spent. The Goals would capture the major functional areas of the district. We would apply the Malcolm Baldrige Model of systems alignment that eliminates silo thinking, saves money, and ultimately improves organizational performance. It took me 2-3 months to identify \$3.5 million of over spending, about 4% of the 2013-14 budget. These became the savings that launched new programs across the district and started an annual rise in the district's fund balance.

- Established Teacher on Special Assignment program for identifying future administrative leaders; e.g. Dr. Bubser, the principal at Strayer Middle School, and other assistant principals are alums
- Personally [mentored teachers and administrators](#) preparing for future professional roles
- Developed a systematic and rigorous process of district goal development, action planning at all levels, and accountability for all administrators to achieve these goals; our system is recognized outside the district for its rigor and approach
- Revised roles and responsibilities to shift more leadership decision-making to the building level, to create opportunities for innovation and risk taking, and to transform district level staff to be mentors, coaches and supports for building level leadership
- Revised expectations and systems to increase collaboration, teamwork, and shared expertise
- Over 90% of the district's principals and assistant principals have completed or enrolled in a doctoral program

Communications

In 2014, I was informed that district leadership presence in buildings, extracurricular activities, and involvement in community organizations and events was virtually non-existent. District-level communications came through Board meetings and meeting minutes.

My vision and strategy was to be omnipresent and personally available to constituents. I wanted to foreshadow the Administration's work and report on upcoming Board decisions through blogs, and create a social media presence that informs and celebrates. A superintendent's presence/location shows what he/she views as important and values throughout a school district! Super blogs role models communication strategies for principals and provides insights to district and board level thinking. And, the use of various types of social media platforms captures students, teachers and coaches in action, and shares what we are doing and why. Another critical component of my work would be building relationships with locally elected officials and township managers.

- Omnipresent in classrooms, schools, along with co-curricular, extra-curricular, community activities and events.
- Reorganized the functional responsibilities to have an assistant superintendent work with principals on a daily basis to develop leadership capacity and increase accountability
- Wrote more than 100 [Super Blogs](#) to inform parents, staff and other constituents and to increase transparency and community participation
- Used [Twitter](#) as a tool to connect and communicate to all constituents, including students, teachers, and coaches use me to re-tweet
- Established the school district communications office that publishes frequent [district newsletters](#), [board newsletters](#), and daily stories that gets our student and district story out locally and statewide
- To create transparency and accountability, started to [record then live stream board meetings](#) (2017)
- Use local publications and media boards, e.g. digital board at intersection of 313 and 309, to advertise our celebrations
- Redesigned the district website to increase usability and ADA compliance
- Wrote several opinion pieces for [The Morning Call](#) and [The Intelligencer](#)
- Used the [Community/Parent Committee process](#) seven years in a row to involve parents in developing policy options for Board decision making, e.g. redistricting/reassignment of students (2014, 2017, 2020,) developing a new Elementary report card (2016,) creating a facilities master plan (2015,) race relations (2017) safety (2018), and school start times (2019)
- Presented "Communications in the Age of Social Media" with Superintendents and emerging leaders in the Bucks County Fellows program
- The National Superintendents Association (AASA) published an article I wrote about ["Mentoring Future Leaders"](#) (December 2021)

Crisis Management

Over the past five years Quakertown was confronted with five significant crises that had a district wide impact: [Cheltenham racial incident](#) at a football, [student-led Black Lives Matter rally](#), two years of COVID, and the Christmas morning fire. Having built a strong and agile leadership team, the district was able to mobilize and effectively lead through each crisis. We used each crisis to further strengthen the leadership team through After Action session discussions.

Human Resources and Supervision

QCSD has enjoyed a long history of collaborative and productive relationships with its bargaining units.

Our vision was to maintain the collaborative relationships with the bargaining units, realign staffing to address emerging needs without new FTEs, maintain costs of labor agreements at or below the Act 1 Index, and to shift our supervision model and practices to support a professional growth mindset.

- Continually realigned staffing to meet district needs and through closing of two buildings and two redistricting processes, limiting new FTEs needed
- Have not furloughed a single teacher
- Implemented a teacher supervision model that promotes professional growth - version 9.0 in '22-'23
- Assistant Superintendent selected as PA Principal Supervisor of the Year
- Founding member of the Bucks/Montgomery Schools Healthcare Consortium, a labor management collaborative effort to continue to provide high quality healthcare to school employees while managing costs.
- Maintained collaborative labor-management relationships despite challenging circumstances, especially during the pandemic. Maintained adequate staffing to keep schools open
- Negotiated labor agreements that kept the total package cost at or below the Act 1 Index

Financial Management

Upon arrival in 2014, one of the Board's top two priorities was to "go find the money." There was the Board's and greater community perception that there was wasteful spending and the annual budgeting process lacked transparency.

Our initial vision was to increase efficiency by aligning activities across the district to our core purpose by reallocating staff and funds from areas that were overstaffed, controlling expenses, and implementing a Zero-Based Budgeting approach to the annual budget development process. We wanted to provide great value to individual taxpayers, especially our homeowners.

- Introduced Zero-Based Budgeting to the school district
- Presented Quakertown's ZBB system to the Pennsylvania Senate Appropriations Committee in Harrisburg at the request of Senator Mensch
- Provided counsel and recommendations during the annual budgetary process that supported the Board's financial objectives
- Negotiated affordable collective bargaining agreements with [QCEA](#) and [QESPA](#) that kept the total compensation package at or below the Act 1 Index
- Purchased 126 acres on West Pumping Station Road for \$1.7 million to ensure affordable land was available to build schools in the future
- Implemented Forecast5 software for multi-year budgeting and forecasting
- Presented budgets at or below the Act 1 Index each year
- Created \$650K savings in transportation by using the hub system to transport private and charter school student (2014-15)
- Increased efficiency and accountability in negotiation of new transportation contract and hiring of an internal transportation coordinator to oversee all aspects of the new contract,
- [Average tax increase from 2015 to 2022](#) was 2.0% with two years of zero tax increase (first ever for QCSD), compared to the average tax increase the previous ten years of 5.3%
- 'Clean' audits
- Capitalized on opportunities to implement cost-saving or cost neutral restructuring plans
- Quakertown property values have skyrocketed and realtors advertise our schools as high performing

Facilities and Maintenance

In 2014, the maintenance of our facilities had been neglected for several decades. Historically, funds initially budgeted for maintenance and capital needs were routinely the first item cut to reduce the budget. The condition of our buildings did not engender a sense of pride or ownership.

Our vision was to put systems in place that would have the condition and feel of our facilities be a point of pride and to properly care for and maintain the community's assets. I recommended to the Board to establish a \$1M capital projects line item in the budget which was implemented a few years later. The Budget line item anchors the Board's ability to prioritize and project capital requirements.

- Assumed the leadership of the High School Renovation Project at the end of Phase 1 and rectified the lack of adequate education specifications, end user input, and district level oversight
- Engaged the community via a community committee to develop a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan including detailed assessments of each building's maintenance needs and options for future building utilization
- Maintained Community Facilities Committee recommendation of \$1 million per year for capital needs in the budget and brought all but one building into the 21st century
- Renovated and expanded Neidig Elementary School within budget
- Implemented a "day maintenance" model to increase ownership of building conditions
- Systematically upgraded equipment and procured new maintenance vehicles
- Procured athletics and special needs transportation vehicles
- Implemented physical security items identified by the [Community Safety Committee](#) and by Risk and Vulnerability Assessments

In 2014, I found the school district without any safety policies, procedures or practices other than the identification of an elementary principal as the district's safety officer and monthly state required fire drills.

Our vision was to develop a robust safety culture that was pervasive throughout Quakertown. Safety would be our top priority. Beginning during the 2014 Summer Leadership workshop to build community around our safety protocols, we would invite the district's entire administrative team and work side-by-side with all six municipalities 1st Responders.

- Began a comprehensive safety program for schools that included partnerships with municipalities and first responders and regular drills and table top exercises - summers of 2014 and 2015
- On my third full day on the job, to demonstrate my priorities, I met with the Quakertown Borough Police Chief and Officer Bob Lee. We shared our mutual vision for creating an SRO program at QCHS.
- Began the [School Resource Officer Program](#) in partnership with Quakertown Borough in 2015 with state grant funds and expanded in it partnership with Richland Township in 2017
- Trained all employees in ALICE protocols for active shooter situations, and obtained [ALICE Organizational Certification](#)
- Utilized a [parent Community Safety Committee](#) to discuss and analyze safety protocols in our schools and implemented many of those recommendations
- Implemented Act 44, including appointment of NE as the Act 44 Coordinator
- Met all health and safety requirements from PDE throughout COVID
- Completed Risk & Vulnerability Assessments on all buildings, including stakeholder review meetings and task lists for identified items
- Implemented After Action Review after major incidents and drills
- Implemented the C-STAG Threat Assessment process and trained all administrators and counselors in the C-STAG protocols, developed threat assessment teams and protocols
- Is the role model district for our safety protocols through Pennsylvania

Governmental & Community Affairs

In 2014, having just completed serving as a superintendent of a district in the Pennsylvania Capitol Area and Acting Secretary of Education, I was convinced of the importance of superintendent and Board engagement with elected local, state and federal officials. I did not find the Administration nor Board actively engaged with other elected officials nor community and business leaders.

Working closely with the Board President, our vision was to create policy influence through active engagement with local municipal, state, and federal leaders, along with many others throughout the Quakertown community.

- Facilitated the start of the quarterly lunches between Senator Mensch and Superintendents in his electoral district
- Established collaborative relationships with municipal and community leaders
- Conducted monthly parent council meetings
- Routinely participated in the annual PSBA ‘Day on the Hill;’ [integrated student representatives and TV crews to increase district exposure](#); exposed Board members to state level political leaders, including the Governor
- Annually took the Varsity Singers to the Capitol; in 2018 the Varsity Singers was the only choir invited to sing for the [Governor’s Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony](#)
- Hosted PA Senator’s sub-committee meeting on school safety
- Hosted both Congressman Fitzpatrick, Senator Mensch, Representative Staats, and DA Matt Weintraub for Friday Night Lights Coin Toss at different times; Board members joined our guests at centerfield
- Pre-COVID, attended community Chamber events at least once monthly
- Was Quakertown Borough’s annual [Memorial Day guest speaker](#)
- Senior leadership team members represented QCSD on the Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce leadership team and on the Upper Bucks YMCA Board
- Annually attend Traumbauersville’s Boy Scout Troop June Picnic to participate in badge requirement completion
- Routinely participate in the Boy Scout Troop’s Eagle Scout Boards of Review
- Served on the Board of the Washington Crossing Council of the Boy Scouts of America for five years
- Twice [hosted regional realtors](#) with tours of our new schools and presentations on student achievement

Technology and Data

In 2014, QCSD was recognized as a national leader in the use of technology. Quakertown had received numerous accolades and awards for its investment. However, several legacy programs, such as the Bridges Virtual Learning and Blackboard Learning Management Systems were not cost effective and/or user friendly and needed close examination.

Our vision was to sustain the high quality of work and [technology access in schools](#) and expand the 1:1 high school initiative into middle, then elementary schools

- Conducted program evaluation on the Bridges Virtual Learning partnership and ultimately withdrew from that program, immediately saving \$800k in staffing costs
- Conducted stakeholder analysis of Blackboard LMS and replaced it with Canvas Learning Management System, initially K-12, then 6-12 when SeeSaw was implemented
- Implemented SeeSaw Learning Management System K-5
- Implemented the Decision Ed Data Warehouse System
- Transitioned to LinkIt Data Management and Assessment System
- Extended the 1:1 laptop program at the high school to middle school and eventually to elementary, which put QCSD in an excellent position to transition to virtual learning on the first day of the COVID pandemic with a 1:1 device program K12
- Pivoted quickly to a 100% virtual model for instruction when required, including developing an MOU with QCEA, and providing training
- Completed the requirements for the COSN Trusted Learning Environment Seal