

Iraan-Sheffield ISD
State of the District Report
December, 2013

Dear Stakeholders of Iraan-Sheffield ISD:

The State of the District report is designed to give an overview of Iraan-Sheffield ISD. As superintendent I have selected several topics that are priorities for all school districts. The basic idea is to recap what has occurred in our school district over a one or two year period of time. The report also addresses other concerns that will need attention by the school board and the superintendent in the near future.

Although not everyone will agree with my interpretation of the State of the District, I would welcome your comments and concerns. The mechanism for change is communication.

My phone number is 432-639-2512 ext. 223 and my email is kevin.allen@isisd.net . I would enjoy hearing from you. Whether your comments are positive or negative, I will find them useful in creating a better learning environment for the children who attend Iraan-Sheffield ISD.

Sincerely,

Kevin Allen
Superintendent of Schools

I. Facilities

- A. Iraan-Sheffield ISD consists of several buildings that are approximately 60 years old. There have been additions to some of the campuses and one renovation in the mid 1980's. It has been reported by two different engineering companies that the original buildings were very well built. The school board of the late 1940's deserves credit for having the vision to build buildings that have withstood the test of time.
- B. The district is nearing the end of the second of three phases and starting the final phase in a 15 million dollar renovation of all campuses in Iraan, paid for by a bond passed by the community in the spring of 2010. The board has also approved 1 million in renovations at the Sheffield campus. The board approved 1.4 million for a new artificial playing surface on the football field. Concrete work was also completed to fix drainage and deteriorated asphalt at the football stadium.
 - a. The Sheffield project and artificial playing surface were paid for out of the district's fund balance.
 - b. Work on the renovation has been slower than expected due to sub-contractor's inability to provide an adequate workforce.
 - i. This situation has improved but there are still some issues with manpower.
 - c. Bidding for phase 2 and 3 is higher than anticipated. The cause was the economic boom the region has seen. This is a good thing but the price of doing business goes up in good times.
 - i. With a set amount of money there will be a negative impact. There has been some room to adjust but not much.
 - 1. There were some renovation items that were not in the base bid that had to be added.
 - a. Examples were carpet, paint and ceiling tiles in all classrooms not just some.
 - ii. To complete the academic buildings, the old high school gym, field house, bus barn and paving had to be removed from the bond project.
 - d. The board also approved renovation of the ag pens. The cost was capped at \$150,000.
 - i. This is a four phase project with the first phase near completion.

II. Accountability

- A. The state accountability system for Texas has undergone a complete overhaul in 2011 and then was overhauled again in 2013 legislative session. Under House Bill 5 there is a reduction in the number of tests from 15 to 5 at the high school level. There is more emphasis on vocational programs for the first time in decades.
 - a. The district will add a vocational teacher to meet the requirements of House Bill 5.
- B. The TEKS are still in place but have been rewritten to a more complex level. The old testing system, TAKS, is being phased out. The new testing system, STAAR/End of Course, was implemented in the spring of 2012. Grades 3 through 8 and all entering 9th were the first group to test. The new testing is more rigorous than the TAKS and is a timed test. Last year's 9th and 10th graders along with the 3rd through 8th grade took the STAAR/End of Course tests in May 2013.
- C. The new testing system requires high school students to pass tests in the four core areas during high school or they will not graduate.
 - a. The tests are Algebra I, Biology, English I & II and U. S. History. Students that fail a test go through remediation and retest until they pass. All tests must be passed to earn a high school diploma.
 - b. The new accountability system has put a lot of stress on core teachers and administrators. This is common whenever a new testing system comes into place.
 - i. I am keeping the staff up to date on new information and training to give us the skills needed to be successful.
 - 1. Over the two year period of the new test our students improved from year one to year two of the test.
 - 2. The district and campuses performed better than our surrounding neighbors and all schools in our region.
 - ii. TEA has been slow to release information to administrators and teachers thus complicating the transition.
 - 1. TEA has released the first version of the new test so that teachers have a better understanding of what is tested.
 - c. Current seniors are still under the TAKS testing system for graduation requirements in the spring of 2014.
- D. The legislature has passed a law that prevents the residential alternative campus at Sheffield from harming the district's accountability rating in the future.
 - a. The appeal filed this year was granted by TEA. There should be no need for appeals from this time forward concerning the Sheffield campus.

- E. To meet the needs of incoming students in the district I have hired two additional aides for ESL at the elementary school for the 2013-2014 school year.

III. Curriculum

- A. The district is in the third year of using CSCOPE curriculum as a mandatory framework for teaching material the state requires. The new name for CSCOPE is TEKS Resource System. The curriculum best mirrors the rigor of the new STAAR testing. The three major components are: Year at a Glance, which serves as a pacing guide; Vertical Alignment, which helps teachers focus on the specifics of his/her class and not wander into other areas that are not tested or in other grade levels; and the Instructional Focus Document, which directs the teacher to the depth of understanding that must be taught in a particular unit.
 - a. Teachers are expected to use their own lesson plans as long as they fit or can be modified within the above guidelines.
 - b. The first year was difficult for teachers which was to be expected. The second year has been much easier for the teachers. Our teachers have completely transitioned during the third year.

IV. Technology

- A. The district is in good shape with the total number of computers. However, they are nearing the end of their life cycle.
 - a. The board placed a superintendent goal of students in grades 6-12 having laptops/tablets available in classrooms.
 - i. The product that best fits classroom needs and costs is the Chromebook. It is Cloud based technology.
 - ii. The cost for Chromebooks, storage/charging carts and training should be in the \$150,000 range.
 - iii. Since new programs are in the “cloud” the Chromebook is only replaced when physically worn out not outdated.
- B. The main software products in our computer labs are *Waterford*, *Success Maker*, *Ascend Math*, *My Reading Coach* and *Reading Plus*. The credit recovery software the district uses is *Odyssey Ware*; it is used extensively at the Sheffield campus and some at the Iraan High School.
- C. The district is starting its fifth year using *Promethean Boards* in the classroom. They are now a mainstay in every teacher’s daily teaching.

V. Financial

- A. Iraan-Sheffield ISD's financial position is in good shape.
 - a. M&O and Medical fund balances are in a good position.
 - b. The board decided to put turf on the football field and do some extensive concrete work along with replacing the fence surrounding the field. The money for these projects came out of the district's fund balance.
 - c. The board has also committed one million dollars to renovate the Sheffield campus.
 - i. The campus is in need of new HVAC equipment, roof, and flooring. Repairs or upgrades to plumbing, electrical and lighting must occur also.
 - d. Both of the above mentioned projects are tax money well spent to make the district safe and modern.
- B. Due to the legislative action during the last two sessions, state funding for public education was reduced by approximately 3 billion dollars. Iraan-Sheffield ISD is operating with 1.5 million less money than 2010.
 - a. Most of the loss has been made up in staff absorption and for two years in a row there was no pay raise for employees.
 - i. This past summer I recommend the board approve a pay raise for Iraan-Sheffield ISD employees.
- C. The school board voted to call a Tax Ratification Election for an additional \$.02 cents. This money is not recaptured by the state. This funding means an additional \$400,000 to the district.
 - a. The voters approved the tax increase by 81% showing community support for their public school.
- D. The accounting practices that are in place for the district are a model for small schools to follow.
- E. When any issue in the district's finances occurs, the board president is informed first, followed by all other board members.
- F. The district is rated through the Texas Comptroller as a Gold Standard for its accounting practices and transparency of fiscal issues to the public. This is the highest rating possible.

VI. Transportation

- A. The district has upgraded transportation during the past six years by adding two small and two large route buses, two charter buses, a small activity bus, two Suburbans, an Ag trailer and a maintenance truck. Nothing has been replaced over the last three years.

- a. In the next two to four years the district needs to replace two of the older Suburbans, two maintenance trucks, two small route buses as well as add another small activity bus.
- b. If other sports are added in the future, then additional buses would be needed for transporting students to contests.

VII. Extracurricular

- A. Our school district takes great pride in having successful extracurricular programs. Students are treated fairly and coached to exceed their physical and mental ability.
- B. We also encourage students to participate in as many activities as they desire. The district has a strong athletic program along with a strong band and UIL academic program.
- C. Very few small districts in the state emphasize all programs the way we do at Iraan-Sheffield ISD. There are areas that need more work to get to the level of excellence that I desire for the district.
 - a. Having coached for 14 years in some of the better programs in the state, I understand and recognize excellence in coaching and student/athlete development. Our personnel work hard to achieve the district's goal of excellence.