Eastern Center for Arts and Technology (EASTERN) maintains its dedication and commitment to educational excellence through a continuous improvement process. The process is based on the beliefs that:

- Student success is the ultimate purpose of everything that happens in the school.
- Meaningful improvement in every aspect of the school is always identifiable and achievable.
- Every member of the school community sets high expectations in every endeavor, individual or collective.
- Effective decision-making must actively involve all of the school’s constituencies, and depends on access to and use of enough of the right kinds of data.

At the start of the 2013-2014 school year, EASTERN embarked on its fourth strategic planning process. The planning process involved the cooperative efforts of the Joint Operating Committee, EASTERN and participating school district administration, staff, students, business and community stakeholders.

Initial work accomplished by eight teams revealed the many strengths and accomplishments of EASTERN; in addition, several potential challenges emerged. Building on this foundation, a diverse group of 30 stakeholders were charged with developing goals and initiatives during a one-day planning retreat held on October 30, 2014. The outcome of the planning retreat will lead to the school’s 2015-2021 Strategic Plan; this document provides a summary of the planning retreat.
Starting with a Solid Foundation

In fall 2013, EASTERN invited multiple stakeholders to participate in one of eight teams. EASTERN staff members formed four internal teams while four external teams were comprised of representatives from the community, local business, and participating school districts and postsecondary education. Each team met three times from January through March 2014 to examine a specific topic relevant to EASTERN’s future; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) framework was utilized to uncover EASTERN’s current reality.

Internal Teams
Examined strengths and weaknesses

- School Climate, Student Success, and Student Life and Services
- Finances, Facilities, Information Resources and Technology
- Health and Safety, Education Programs, Assessment
- Mission, Governance, and Institutional Planning

External Teams
Identified perceived opportunities and threats

- Legal and Legislative Trends
- Technology and Environmental Trends
- Social and Local Demographics Trends
- Economic and Industry Trends
Assessing the Current Reality

A Current Reality Report synthesized the work accomplished by the eight teams. In analyzing the school’s weaknesses, several broad thematic issues emerged and were considered areas of challenge:

**Technology**
- STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and math)
- Infrastructure
- Instructional technology
- Cyberbullying and other pitfalls of technology

**Funding and Enrollment**
- Impact of Keystone Exams and Advanced Placement
- Aging community
- Adult education

**Building Infrastructure**
- Heating and cooling system
- Safety
- Outdoor signage

**Student Success**
- Mental health of today’s students
- Career awareness
- Number of instructional assistants
- Participation in SkillsUSA

**Professional Development**
- Periodic review of cyber safety, sexual harassment, and child abuse
- Instructional technology
- Career pathways and emerging industries
- PA Core Standards
- PA Framework for Teaching
- Student assessment

**Data**
- Data collection and sharing
- Adult education

*The Current Reality Report and the reports from the eight individual teams are available on EASTERN's web site at www.eastech.org.*
Guiding the Future with Goals

The Current Reality Report, particularly the six identified thematic issues, served as the foundation for a full-day planning retreat held at EASTERN on October 30, 2014. The event began with an overview of the current state of career and technical education, pointing out the critical need for highly effective and relevant career and technical centers such as EASTERN. Also provided was a status update on the 2008-2014 Strategic Plan.

Using the Current Reality Report as a starting point, the group reached consensus on four goals and several corresponding initiatives. This work was achieved through small and whole group discussion, reflection, and thoughtful consideration. The goals and corresponding initiatives developed at the planning retreat are:

GOAL 1
Student Success: Develop industry-driven programs with robust offerings while expanding support systems for diverse learners culminating in student success.

- Evaluate current program offerings on a regular basis and expand or reduce as appropriate.
- Create a Student Success Network that reduces barriers to student achievement utilizing internal and external resources including EASTERN alumni.
- Deepen current and prospective student understanding of career pathways beginning with an emphasis of EASTERN’s programs of studies.
- Strengthen entrance counseling to help clarify students’ educational goals (military, postsecondary education, and workforce entry).

GOAL 2
Student Recruitment: Maximize enrollment, with attention to fiscal resources and building capacity.

- Sustain the number of programs and sections necessary to meet enrollment goal of 550 students.
- Review policies and procedures that potentially inhibit student enrollment at EASTERN.
- Strengthen marketing and outreach to middle school students, ninth and tenth grade students, and parents.

GOAL 3
External Partnerships: Promote the benefits of the school to external partners and increase partner involvement.

- Develop a business plan to engage the broader business community and generate new revenue streams by positioning EASTERN as a total workforce development provider including secondary and/or adult education and customized training.
• Develop a system that ensures that students connect with business and industry relevant to their employment goals.

• Develop business and corporate foundation sponsorship opportunities of new and/or existing programs.

• Explore the role of the EASTERN Foundation in securing tax-deductible donations to support the CTE programs.

**GOAL 4**

*Operational Sustainability: Create efficiencies to maintain highly effective operational support services.*

• Create internal capacity and expertise for facilities management and capital planning.

• Explore efficiencies in technological systems at EASTERN.

• Create internal capacity and expertise for data management and reporting.

**Taking the Next Steps**

With clearly stated goals and initiatives in place, EASTERN’s administrative team will develop the necessary action steps and metrics needed to ensure progress. The anticipated completion is March 2015. The action steps will be integrated into a comprehensive Strategic Plan and presented to EASTERN’s Joint Operating Committee by August 2015. While ongoing reflection will take place throughout the six-year plan, a focused mid-point review of accomplishments and challenges will be conducted in the plan’s third year.
Strategic Planning
Retreat Participants

Mr. Thomas Allen
*EASTERN, Administrative Director*

Ms. Chynna Huff
*EASTERN Student*

Mr. Gary Bissig
*EASTERN Parent*

Dr. Andrew Ippolito
*Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, MCCC*

Ms. Maria M. Border
*PPDC Instructor, Penn State University*

Ms. Marureen Klenk
*Upper Dublin SD, Sp. Ed. Transition Coordinator*

Mr. Joseph Carracappa
*Principal, Upper Moreland High School*

Dr. Art Levinowitz
*Joint Operating Committee President*

Ms. Kathleen Carver
*Occupational Advisory Committee*

Ms. Marisol Lezcano
*Executive Director MC Workforce Investment Board*

Ms. Joyce Clark
*EASTERN Parent*

Mr. Hans Meeder
*Strategic Planning Consultant*

Ms. Jackie Cullen
*Executive Director, PACTA*

Dr. Robert Milrod, Superintendent
*Upper Moreland School District*

Mr. Anthony Davis
*EASTERN student*

Mr. Steven Parke
*EASTERN, Auto Collision Repair Instructor*

Mr. John DiBenedetto
*Executive Advisory Committee*

Ms. Monica Parsons
*EASTERN Student*

Dr. Jeffrey Fecher
*Assistant Superintendent, Abington*

Ms. Carolyn Riley
*Joint Operating Committee, Jenkintown*

Dr. MaryKay Feeley, Superintendent
*Lower Moreland School District*

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Mr. Joseph Greb
*EASTERN, Assistant Director*

Ms. Jackie Thurlow
*EASTERN Accountant*

Ms. Jennifer Haney
*Counselor, Upper Moreland High School*

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