

Duanesburg Central Schools

Community Survey Report

Introduction

The Duanesburg Central School District conducted a community survey in November/December 2013. The purpose was to collect residents' opinions about the district's programs and services.

The survey was voluntary and anonymous. The survey was available online on the district's website (www.duanesburg.org) in early December and was mailed to all residents in the winter issue of the district's newsletter.

A total of 189 individuals chose to fill out the survey, 171 online and 18 on paper. While the data contained herein do not represent the opinions of all residents, they do provide 189 residents' perceptions about the district. In particular, the open-ended answers and comments provided by respondents provide valuable insight into the thoughts, concerns and expectations of these residents—opinions that are likely shared by others.

The following data were compiled by the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service, in cooperation with the BOCES public information specialist assigned to Duanesburg, Monique Jacobs.

***Please note:** For some questions, total percentages may add up to more than 100% because participants were able to select more than one answer choice. Percentages, where provided, are out of the number of survey participants who responded to that particular question, and not out of the total number of survey participants. With the exception of the Additional Comments question, all questions were answered by at least 95 percent of respondents.*

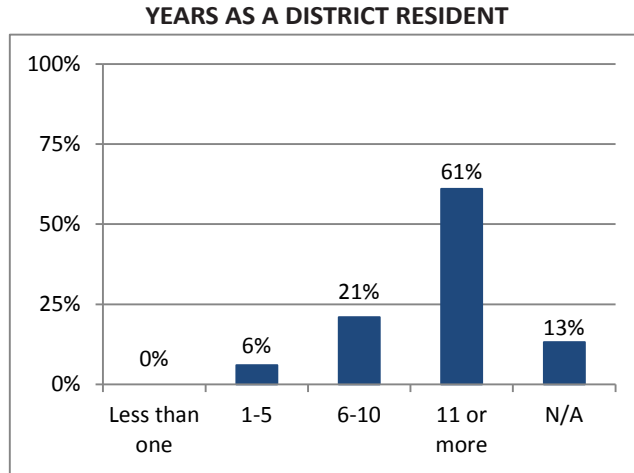
About the survey respondents

Duanesburg's community survey included several questions designed to gather some basic demographic information from respondents, including identifying their affiliation with the district. About 84% identified themselves as residents of the school district and 68% said they were parents of current Duanesburg students. Below is a breakdown of respondents' affiliation:

Resident	84%
Business owner	14%
Current DCS student	7%
Current DCS employee.....	20%
Parent of current DCS student.....	67%
Parent of DCS graduate.....	24%
Parent of pre-school age child(ren)	9%
Parent of child(ren) not attending DCS	4%
Other.....	6%

Respondents were asked to select all affiliations that applied to them. Filtering the data shows that just 9 respondents (5%) identified themselves as only a resident or business owner.

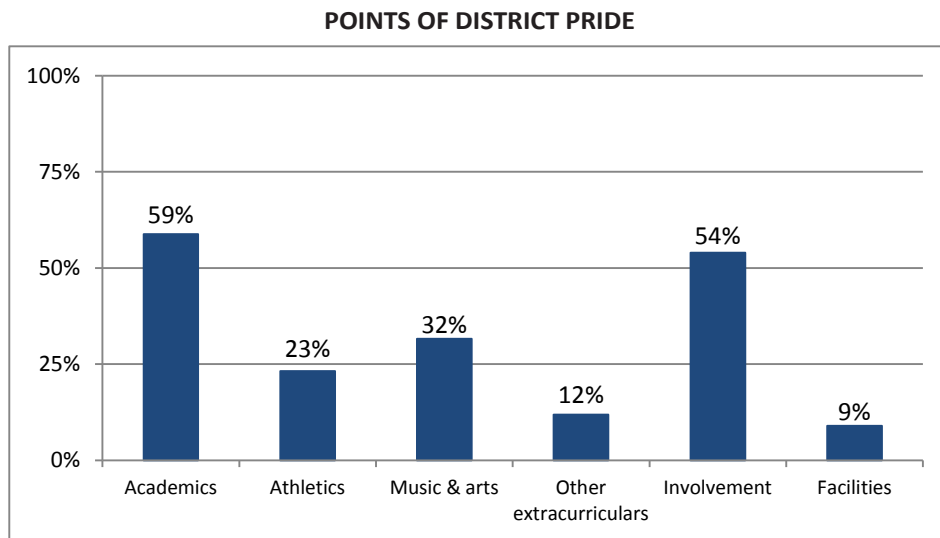
Of the 11 respondents (6%) who selected “other” for their affiliation, all but one selected at least one other affiliation. Specific responses can be found on p. 27.



All respondents indicated that they have lived in the district for at least one year, with 61% saying they’ve lived in DCS for 11 or more years. [See chart, above right.] Less than one-fifth (17%) identified themselves as graduates of the district.

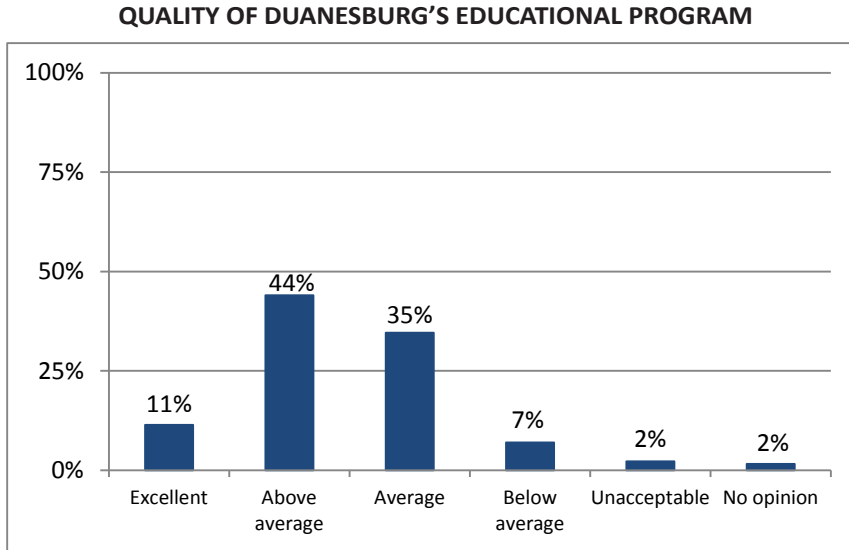
District programs and priorities

When asked what they were most proud of about the district, more than half of all respondents (59%) said the educational program, followed by parent and community involvement (54%). About one-third (32%) said they are proud of the district’s music & arts programs, while almost one-quarter (23%) chose athletics. [See chart, below.] Another 22% selected “other;” specific responses can be found on pp. 11-12.



Regardless of how respondents identified themselves, the educational program and parent and community involvement remained the top two answer choices for this question.

More than half of survey respondents (55%) said they consider the district’s educational program to be “above average” or “excellent.” Less than 10% said it was “below average” or “unacceptable,” and three respondents (2%) offered no opinion. [See chart, below.]



The most favorable opinions were expressed by those identifying as preschool parents, parents of non-district children and current employees, with 82%, 75% and 64%, respectively, giving a rating of at least “above average.” Conversely, just 33% of current students and 40% of business owners who responded gave a rating of at least “above average.”

Respondents were also asked to rate the quality of specific program and service areas. For all areas except special education services, the most common rating was “average.” (For special education, the most common answer was “don’t know” at 43%.) In general, more respondents indicated a favorable view of each program/service area (i.e., selected a rating of “excellent” or “above average” than indicated a negative one (i.e., a rating of “below average” or “unacceptable”). However, the opposite was true for enrichment opportunities and other extracurricular offerings, for which more respondents indicated a negative view.

This is also reflected in the average rating. For each answer option, a numeric rating was assigned, with 5 being “excellent” and 1 being “unacceptable.” The average numeric rating for each area was slightly more than 3 (“average”), except for enrichment opportunities and other extracurricular offerings, for which the average numeric rating was slightly below 3. This data is summarized on the following page; complete data are on p. 13.

	Excellent/ Above Avg.	Average	Below Avg./ Unacceptable	Don't Know	Rating Avg.
Enrichment opportunities	15%	39%	25%	22%	2.86
Special education services	32%	20%	5%	43%	3.56
Response to intervention	26%	31%	13%	30%	3.28
Athletic programs	28%	45%	11%	16%	3.26
Music & art programs	41%	41%	11%	8%	3.42
Other extracurriculars	17%	39%	21%	23%	2.98

When asked to identify their priorities for the district, the highest percentage answers spoke to academics. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents said maintaining or expanding Advanced Placement and/or college-level courses was “very important.” Nearly as many (71%) said maintaining or expanding academic support services was “very important,” and more than two-thirds (69%) said the same about maintaining or expanding high school electives.

Of note, keeping future tax increases as low as possible was identified as “very important” by less than half of all respondents (47%). The table below shows the percentage of respondents who indicated each area listed as “very important;” complete data are on p. 14.

Maintaining/expanding high school electives.....	69%
Maintaining/expanding AP/college-level courses	75%
Maintaining/expanding extracurricular offerings	48%
Maintaining/expanding athletic offerings	37%
Maintaining/expanding academic support services	71%
Maintaining/expanding K-8 enrichment opportunities	58%
Maintaining/expanding arts & music offerings.....	53%
Maintaining/upgrading facilities	59%
Improving school safety.....	49%
Maintaining current class sizes	61%
Keeping future tax increases as low as possible	47%

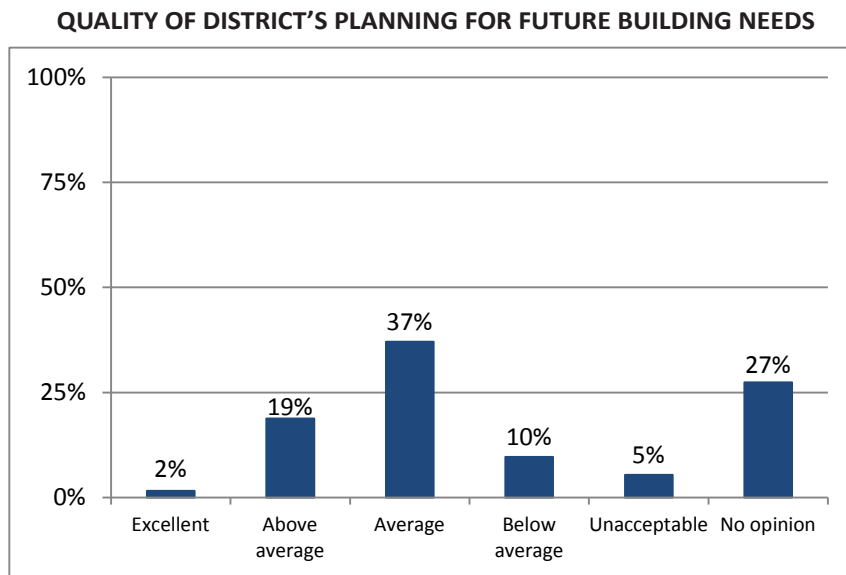
A separate survey question asked respondents about the district’s efforts to seek input from parents and community members. More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) said they feel the district actively seeks input, while 19% said the district does not and 13% said they did not know. Comments from those who said no can be found on pp. 23-24

Among business owners who responded to the survey, 56% said the district actively seeks input, compared with 81% of employee respondents and 70% of district parents (those whose children currently attend Duanesburg schools) who responded.

Adequacy of facilities and planning for building needs

More than half (54%) of respondents said they feel the school buildings are adequate and well-maintained, while more than one-third (35%) said they do not feel that way and 11% said they do not know. Comments from those who said no can be found on pp. 16-19.

Regarding planning for future building needs, 20% of respondents rated the district's efforts as "excellent" or "above average," compared with 15% who rated them as "below average" or "unacceptable." More than one-quarter (27%) had no opinion on the question.



It is interesting to note that while 67% of respondents who identified themselves as current students consider the buildings adequate and well-maintained, 46% of respondents who are current employees do. Similarly, 50% of student respondents consider the district's facilities planning efforts to be better than average, while just 28% of employee respondents do.

District communications efforts

To help gauge community access to online communications, respondents were asked about their internet access. A significant majority (83%) said they have reliable internet access at home, while 12% said it is not reliable. Another 5% said they have access elsewhere, and no respondents said they lacked home internet access entirely.

Based on survey data, the district's newsletter, website and/or School News Notifier (SNN) are the primary sources of information for at least two-thirds of respondents. Friends/neighbors and students were each cited by slightly less than half of all respondents.

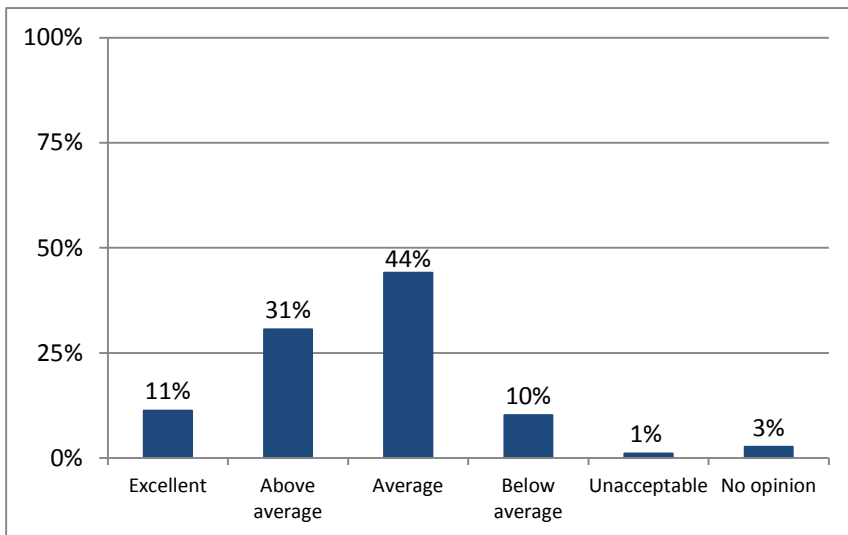
A breakdown by information source appears on the following page.

District newsletters.....	77%
District website.....	72%
School building communications.....	26%
Board of Education meetings.....	15%
School News Notifier (SNN)	67%
District Facebook page	14%
Other social media.....	3%
Local media.....	13%
PTSO	13%
School district staff.....	39%
Friends/neighbors	48%
Students	47%

Similar findings are evident regardless of how respondents identified themselves—i.e., the district newsletter, website and/or SNN were the most cited information sources among residents, business owners, students, employees and parents. Not surprisingly, students cited other students and employees cited other employees as their information source at higher percentages than those for respondents as a whole.

When asked about the quality and usefulness of the information received from the district, 42% said it’s “excellent” or “above average” compared with 11% who said it’s “below average” or “unacceptable.” Another 44% said district communications are “average,” and 3% had no opinion.

QUALITY AND USEFULNESS OF DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS



Cross-Tabulation:

**Responses to select questions, based
on how respondents identified themselves**

1. How would you rate the overall quality of the district's educational program?

	Please check ALL that apply to you.				
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duanesburg CSD student	Current Duanesburg CSD employee	Response Totals
Excellent	11.0% (17)	12.0% (3)	16.7% (2)	13.9% (5)	11.0% (20)
Above average	41.3% (64)	28.0% (7)	16.7% (2)	50.0% (18)	43.6% (79)
Average	36.1% (56)	48.0% (12)	58.3% (7)	33.3% (12)	34.8% (63)
Below average	7.7% (12)	12.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6.6% (12)
Unacceptable	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	8.3% (1)	2.8% (1)	2.2% (4)
No opinion	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (3)
answered question	155	25	12	36	181
skipped question					0

2. What are you most proud of about the Duaneburg Central Schools? [Please select all that apply.]

	Please check ALL that apply to you.				
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duaneburg CSD student	Current Duaneburg CSD employee	Response Totals
Educational program (academics)	57.1% (84)	45.8% (11)	33.3% (4)	68.6% (24)	59.5% (103)
Athletics	21.1% (31)	25.0% (6)	33.3% (4)	37.1% (13)	23.1% (40)
Music & arts	28.6% (42)	41.7% (10)	16.7% (2)	45.7% (16)	31.8% (55)
Other extracurricular offerings	9.5% (14)	12.5% (3)	8.3% (1)	22.9% (8)	12.1% (21)
Parent & community involvement	52.4% (77)	54.2% (13)	41.7% (5)	62.9% (22)	54.3% (94)
Facilities	9.5% (14)	4.2% (1)	8.3% (1)	14.3% (5)	9.2% (16)
Other (please specify)	33 replies (22.4%)	2 replies (8.3%)	4 replies (33.3%)	4 replies (11.4%)	20.8% (36)
answered question	147	24	12	35	173
	skipped question				8

5. Do you feel that the district's school buildings are adequate and well-maintained?

Please check ALL that apply to you.					
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duanesburg CSD student	Current Duanesburg CSD employee	Response Totals
Yes	57.1% (88)	64.0% (16)	66.7% (8)	45.7% (16)	55.3% (99)
No	32.5% (50)	20.0% (5)	33.3% (4)	40.0% (14)	34.1% (61)
Don't know	10.4% (16)	16.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (5)	10.6% (19)
If no, why not?	49 replies	4 replies	5 replies	17 replies	75
answered question	154	25	12	35	179
skipped question					2

6. How would you rate the district's planning for future building needs (maintenance, repairs, adequate space and facilities etc.)?

	Please check ALL that apply to you.				
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duanesburg CSD student	Current Duanesburg CSD employee	Response Totals
Excellent	2.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	8.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (3)
Above average	17.6% (27)	16.7% (4)	41.7% (5)	27.8% (10)	18.4% (33)
Average	36.6% (56)	33.3% (8)	16.7% (2)	33.3% (12)	36.9% (66)
Below average	9.2% (14)	8.3% (2)	8.3% (1)	13.9% (5)	9.5% (17)
Unacceptable	5.9% (9)	4.2% (1)	16.7% (2)	2.8% (1)	5.6% (10)
No opinion	28.8% (44)	37.5% (9)	8.3% (1)	22.2% (8)	27.9% (50)
answered question	153	24	12	36	179
skipped question					2

7. How do you get most of your information about the district? [Please select all that apply.]

	Please check ALL that apply to you.				
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duanesburg CSD student	Current Duanesburg CSD employee	Response Totals
District newsletters	79.6% (121)	92.0% (23)	81.8% (9)	64.7% (22)	76.3% (135)
District website	71.7% (109)	72.0% (18)	45.5% (5)	70.6% (24)	71.8% (127)
School building communications	20.4% (31)	24.0% (6)	9.1% (1)	47.1% (16)	24.9% (44)
Board of Education meetings	14.5% (22)	28.0% (7)	27.3% (3)	17.6% (6)	14.7% (26)
School News Notifier (SNN)	67.1% (102)	56.0% (14)	54.5% (6)	64.7% (22)	66.1% (117)
Duanesburg's Facebook page	13.8% (21)	8.0% (2)	9.1% (1)	8.8% (3)	13.0% (23)
Other social media	3.3% (5)	4.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.8% (5)
Local media (e.g., newspapers, TV news)	13.2% (20)	12.0% (3)	9.1% (1)	11.8% (4)	12.4% (22)
PTSO	13.2% (20)	12.0% (3)	9.1% (1)	5.9% (2)	12.4% (22)
School district staff	34.9% (53)	48.0% (12)	36.4% (4)	67.6% (23)	39.5% (70)
Friends/neighbors	53.3% (81)	52.0% (13)	27.3% (3)	26.5% (9)	48.6% (86)
Students	49.3% (75)	52.0% (13)	63.6% (7)	29.4% (10)	46.3% (82)
answered question	152	25	11	34	177
	skipped question				4

8. How would you rate the quality and usefulness of the information you receive from the school district?

Please check ALL that apply to you.					
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duanesburg CSD student	Current Duanesburg CSD employee	Response Totals
Excellent	9.1% (14)	12.0% (3)	16.7% (2)	25.7% (9)	11.7% (21)
Above average	29.9% (46)	44.0% (11)	25.0% (3)	28.6% (10)	30.7% (55)
Average	45.5% (70)	28.0% (7)	33.3% (4)	40.0% (14)	43.6% (78)
Below average	12.3% (19)	12.0% (3)	16.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	10.6% (19)
Unacceptable	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)
No opinion	2.6% (4)	4.0% (1)	8.3% (1)	5.7% (2)	2.8% (5)
answered question	154	25	12	35	179
skipped question					2

9. Do you feel the district actively seeks the input of parents and community members?

Please check ALL that apply to you.					
	Resident of the school district	Business owner in the school district	Current Duanesburg CSD student	Current Duanesburg CSD employee	Response Totals
Yes	66.0% (101)	56.0% (14)	75.0% (9)	80.6% (29)	68.2% (122)
No	21.6% (33)	24.0% (6)	16.7% (2)	5.6% (2)	19.6% (35)
Don't know	12.4% (19)	20.0% (5)	8.3% (1)	13.9% (5)	12.3% (22)
If no, why not?	25 replies	5 replies	3 replies	2 replies	35
answered question	153	25	12	36	179
	skipped question				2