



Duanesburg CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

133 School Drive Delanson, NY 12053 (518) 895-2279 fax (518) 895-2626 www.duanesburg.org

Discussion questions for Duanesburg Central School Education Summit January 9, 2014

Why a Summit?

It is the mission of the Duanesburg Central School District (DCS) and the responsibility of the Board of Education to provide an educational program that meets student needs while also being responsive and accountable to all residents. The district has been fiscally responsible, our students are performing at a high level, and DCS continues to keep its local share of taxes at one of the lowest levels in the region.

The Board of Education has been working to develop a district-wide strategic plan to ensure the long-term viability of the district and the success of our students.

As rising costs that are outpace state and federal school aid and stress their taxpayer base, schools across the state have made serious program and staffing cuts. However, this comes at a time when much more is demanded of graduates not only to succeed, but to survive in a highly competitive, economically turbulent, global society.

DCS wants to determine how to best preserve opportunities for all students – and particularly for those who will soon make the transition from high school to the workplace, college or military service - while also making decisions that align with the community's priorities.

Question #1:

What do you value most about the academic program of the Duanesburg Central School District?

Background information:

DCS students are performing at a high level compared to other districts, with one of the highest graduation rates in the region and a majority of grads pursuing post-secondary education. DCS consistently ranks in the top 25% of regional schools, out performing comparable sized or larger schools.

- Academic Ranking: Top 18% - 23% of 90+ regional schools
- Advanced Placement, University in the HS, Honors courses
 - UHS American History
 - AP Gov't
 - AP World History
 - AP Micro/Macro Economics
 - UHS Prin. of Business
 - AP English Language
 - AP English Lit
 - UHS Environmental Science
 - UHS Senior Math
 - UHS Pre-Calculus
 - AP/UHS Calculus
 - AP Psychology
 - UHS Sociology
 - UHS Spanish IV & V

- Project Lead the Way
- Career & Technical Education (CTE/VoTec)

DCS needs to maintain opportunities for all students, including access to advanced courses keeps students competitive. Past investments are paying dividends now, and DCS is well positioned with excellent investments in technology and distance learning:

- Technology investments: Interactive whiteboards, student access to laptops/netbooks, wired classrooms, Blackboard e-learning software, video game development class
- Excellent investments in Distance Learning: 1 Distance Learning room, 2 mobile Distance Learning solutions

DCS is financially stable and fiscally responsive:

- Tax rate ranking: Bottom 1/3 of 90+ regional schools
- Pay (administrative and teacher): Bottom 1/3 of 90+ regional schools

DCS extracurricular offerings:

- 3rd grade Chorus: usually 50+ students (in the spring)
- 4th/5th grade Chorus: 80 students
- 5th grade musical: 27 students
- Athletics
- HS Band: 37 students (2009/10: 20) Projected 2014/15: 50
- MS Band: 59 students (2009/10: 26) Projected 2014/15: 74
- 5th grade Band: 30 students (2009/10 4th & 5th grade: 33) Projected 2014/15: 30
- HS Choir: 46 students
- MS Choir: 65 students
- 6th grade Choir: 36 students
- Select Choir: 24 students
- Drama Club: 40 students
- Clubs
- Student Government

Survey Results:

When surveyed about 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%). Thirty-two percent said they are proud of the district's music and arts programs, while 23% chose athletics, and 22% selected "other."

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."

When asked to identify their priorities for the district, the highest percentage of 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.

Question #2:

The results of our recent community survey indicate that our facilities play an important role in helping to meet the needs of our students and community. Should the district consider taking a closer look at improving its facilities to benefit the overall program?

Background information:

Construction and renovations history may be found on the separate handout.

More than half (54%) of respondents to the survey 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.

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.

Question #3:

What would you like to see the district do to further enhance opportunities for community involvement?

Background information:

Ways you can become more involved in our school:

- Attend Board of Education meetings.
- Keep in touch with your school.
- Watch the DCS website, subscribe to SNN emails
- Become involved in the PTSO
- Participate in advocacy events.
- Get involved in the upcoming budget process.
 - Learn the budgeting process.
 - Understand budget priorities.
 - Attend community budget forums.

Thank you for your participation this evening!