

Community Partnerships Make Our Schools Strong

Feedback needed on potential operating levy

The Dover School District is blessed to have a strong relationship with our community. We work collaboratively on various issues to enable the school district to make decisions that reflect the values, needs and goals of our residents.

Dover has many community groups and partnerships that ensure accountability and improvement.

One of our newly formed groups is the Safety Task Force. Student safety is at the top of everyone's priority list. The purpose of this group of 18 community members is to review the district's current safety practices and make recommendations for future improvements. The action of this group will have immediate impact on classroom preparedness. Through the work of the Dover Fire Department and generous donations from community members, all teachers will receive additional first aid training on the use of trauma kits. These kits will also be provided for every classroom throughout the district.

When it comes to finances, the treasurer's Financial Review Task Force made up of community members with expertise in business and finance works collaboratively with our treasurer, Marsha Clark, to review the district's financial information. Established in 2008, members will be very busy this spring as the district is reviewing plans to place an operating levy on the ballot. As we shared during the recent capital campaign for the new high school, these operating funds are needed, but are separate from the high school project. The new high school is funded by a bond levy approved by voters in 2016. The bond levy funds cannot be used for day-to-day operating needs, such as staff members, technology, utilities, or transportation. The community will play a vital role in securing the funds needed to maintain the district's current educational programs.

Another important community group, the Facility Task Force, was formed in 2015 as the district developed the plan for a new high school. Their advice, recommendations and willingness to help share information with our community paved the way to success in November of 2016. Community participation in planning for the new school has led to a unique design that will meet the needs of all students.

Beyond a task force or committee, we also believe it is important to provide opportunities for all residents to share opinions and participate in the decision making process. In the coming weeks, a sample of our community will be surveyed regarding their opinions on how we are doing academically and financially as a school district and ways to improve. This information is vital as we are making important decisions for the future, including the possibility of an operating levy. We welcome your thoughts and guidance.