



A Message from Your Superintendent

After Challenging Year, Future Looks Promising

Dear Dover Residents:

It goes without saying that it has been a challenging year. We have all experienced uncertainty and changes in our day-to-day routines. But now, hope is on the horizon, and the future looks promising.

Reflecting on the past year, we learned many valuable lessons as educators. Within the pages of our latest newsletter, our staff shares stories about how they have worked collaboratively and creatively to ensure meaningful learning is happening, despite the challenges of school during a pandemic.

The support of our families, staff and community is heroic, as we all made great efforts to support each other over the last year. To me, the one word that defines the strength of our schools and community is resilience. It encompasses what it means to be a Dover Tornado, and that's the Dover Difference.

Sincerely, *Carla Birney*
Carla Birney, Superintendent



"To me, the one word that defines the strength of our schools and community is resilience."

- Carla Birney
Superintendent

Financial Update by Kathryn Brugger, Treasurer

Uncertain of Future Funding, We Continue to Streamline Operations

The financial challenges during the global pandemic continue to impact our school budget. Despite some positive news in recent months, the district still faces financial challenges.

In January, Governor DeWine restored some of the state funding reductions that schools experienced last Spring. Dover City Schools will be receiving \$210,000 back into our state foundation funding. We welcome these short-term developments; however in the long-term, the district will be needing additional revenue support, which it has not had for the last 12 years, in order to maintain the current programs and services we offer to students.

In addition, the CARES Act provides schools with one-time funds to meet pandemic related needs. It comes with spending guidelines for learning recovery and wellness funding, and, although it is not a windfall of cash to our schools, it will be helpful in our attention to the social and emotional wellness of students and academic recovery in the wake of the pandemic.

On the state level, the Ohio legislature is currently debating the next biennial budget. It is still too early to predict what the final outcome will be for our schools, but we remain committed to advocating for fair school funding for our students and taxpayers.

Although we cannot control what happens on the state and national level when it comes to funding for our schools, we can continue to operate responsibly. Dover City Schools remains committed to seeking out ways to streamline our operations while protecting the programs and services we all value in our schools.



"... we remain committed to advocating for fair school funding for our students and taxpayers."

- Kathryn Brugger
Treasurer



#wearedover
#thedoverdifference

DMS Cafeteria and Custodial Staff Keep Students Fueled Up, Ready to Learn

There is a vast amount of work behind the scenes that must take place to support meaningful learning. Thanks to the flexibility and excellent organization of our cafeteria and custodial staff, our students at the middle school have been receiving daily nutritious meals in a different, yet efficient manner, fueling our students to be at the ready for classroom instruction.

This year, there has been an increase in meals served, as meals are free to all students. Due to social distancing guidelines, students are eating in classrooms rather than in the cafeteria. Thanks to the efforts of cafeteria workers Barb Shaw, Carol Gribble, Melissa Kempfer, and Melissa Rossiter, students are receiving meals, with the same variety of options available, on a daily basis.

Daytime custodian, Brenda Sibley, has also adjusted and adapted to meet the needs of students. Lunch periods span two and a half hours every day. Throughout that time, Sibley wheels four to five trash bins in and out of classrooms to collect lunch trash. She then does the majority of the room sanitization after the students finish lunch.

"It's really been impressive," said assistant principal at Dover Middle School, Kurt Reveal. He continued, "Everything they have been familiar with has been completely turned upside down, but they have adjusted so well...and multiple times. They really do a tremendous job!"

The staff has been challenged to change gears several times through this process, as we moved to hybrid, settled in, then moved to the A1 model of learning. The staff managed to adjust on the fly, by serving meals in classrooms, in new packaging, with a welcoming smile. There are times where something goes awry, as lunch staff doesn't have the counts right or a student forgets to mark their choice in the morning. The staff is very accommodating, making the experience as positive as possible for our students.

Reveal also applauded eighth-grade Spanish teacher, Melissa Schumacher. Schumacher is free to leave after third period when her classes are over. Many days, she volunteers her time to stay and help with lunch, and when cafeteria staff is absent, she dives right in to help wherever needed.

This demonstration of teamwork by cafeteria staff, Sibley, and Schumacher is a true representation of the #DoverDifference.



Left to Right: Melissa Kempfer, Brenda Sibley, Melissa Schumacher, Carol Gribble, Malissa Rossiter, Barb Shaw

How to Teach Music to Young Students During a Global Pandemic

Cindy Parsons, kindergarten and first-grade music teacher at South Elementary, was committed to providing quality music instruction despite the obstacles surrounding COVID-19 protocols. Parsons explained it was "Kind of daunting to start the school year with all of the restrictions, but there have been some surprises."

Music class for our youngest elementary students usually incorporates a lot of contact between students, shared instruments, and a sense of community in the music room. It was necessary to adjust and adapt to the temporary situation to keep the students moving and grooving despite the inability to be in the classroom with shared instruments and close contact..

Parsons took action last summer to make sure her students were still able to develop their music skills. She made individual instrument kits for each of her students that included: dowel rods, easter eggs with gravel as a shaker, a movement scarf, and pool noodles as scrapers. "It's not the same, but SOMETHING for them to use."

Another change to the curriculum originated as a classroom management strategy, but has blossomed into much more. Since Parsons pushes a cart from room to room, she has started every single lesson with silent listening time to allow her students to begin learning while she sets up. The students love it and it teaches them active listening skills. They have to be silent and stay in their seats, but they are encouraged to move freely; tapping their shoulders to keep the beat, miming musical instruments they hear in the music.

I've been impressed with the way they have been able to develop their listening skills. Teachers report the kids are identifying instruments and keeping the beat when they play music at other times throughout the day.

Music is an important part of elementary education. We are a little more "in the desk," but music does allow the opportunity for movement and community building. (See photos at top of next page).



Students in Cindy Parsons music class (see story at left) keep the beat on their shoulders, playing instruments from their kits, and miming playing instruments (air guitar).



Mr. Coventry made everyone smile with his snow designs outside of the school!



Student Council hosted a "Hat Day" at East Elementary in January. This friendly dinosaur teacher reminded us that dinos don't wear hats and winter is snow much fun! We hope the students enjoyed the fun activity. #weare Dover #thedoverdifference

Time Passage



Our high school students and staff may have noticed a new clock installed recently - but you might not know the history behind it. A clock was originally planned to be a part of the 1915 portion of the old building; however, it was never installed. The process of getting the clock to the new high school has been a community effort!

- The removal and preservation of the original stone from the old high school was paid for by a grant from the City of Dover's bed-tax funds.
- The Reeves Foundation grant paid for the new foundation and placing the stone in its new home.
- The Dover High School Class of 1962, led by Jon and Bonnie Mason, raised the money to purchase the clock that was made by the Verdin Clock Company of Cincinnati.
- Thank you to all who were involved in the process of bringing the clock to Dover High School! #weare Dover #thedoverdifference

Student Well-being Impacted by Social-Emotional Learning

Dover City Schools is invested in educating the whole child. Based on the understanding that a large part of a child's development is social-emotional learning (SEL), we have adopted a K-12 initiative with the help of grant money to address the SEL education of our students.

Unsurprisingly, this year has been challenging. Students have struggled with schedules and remote learning. Michelle Grimm, Dover High School (DHS) counselor adds, "the lack of structure has been hard on kids."

DHS and Dover Middle School are moving forward with the development of a Hope Squad for both schools, which is a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program. Hope Squad members are nominated by their classmates as trustworthy peers and trained by advisors. The program reduces youth suicide through education, training, and peer intervention.

The implementation of Hope Squad will provide "a much-needed bridge," explained Steve Bender, DHS school counselor. "This will help identify students in need of help, so we can provide them with services or referrals if needed."

Our three elementary buildings have also teamed up to meet the SEL needs of the 1000 K-5 students served in Dover.

Students are currently working on the bullying prevention unit. "Lessons include feelings surrounding bullying and mean behaviors," explained Jen Hindman, Elementary School Counselor. "Students discuss the difference between bullying and mean behavior. They touch on reporting to a caring adult, refusing to be involved in behavior, and the role of a bystander."

Next year, the district will be implementing the full curriculum: self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, regulating emotions.

While Hindman is already excited about the program, she said "the power in it will come in the future years when kids have been a part of this same curriculum and they are seeing the continuity of it as they progress through each grade level."

Bender echoed Hindman's excitement: "Seeing the middle school students come to the high school with this training - the whole K-12 process is something that really excites me."

While this SEL curriculum is aligned with the state's whole child initiative, this is much bigger than that. "If there is one positive that comes from COVID, it will be the normalization of mental health and the understanding that mental health and physical health are equally important," explained Hindman.



DOVER CITY SCHOOLS

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Our eighth-grade art students have been focusing on layering colors with colored pencils and crayons. Check out their works of art!

Parents Key to Online Academy Success

When preparing for a school year amid a global pandemic, Dover City Schools offered parents an option for students outside of the traditional classroom—our Online Academy. The program has been mostly well-received, with parents grateful for an option for learning outside of the classroom during these uncertain times. We are also finding things about the program that are working very well for students.

Denise Grimm, fourth- and fifth-grade teacher entered the year hopeful, but concerned teaching online might be boring. She is happy to report she was wrong. Online Academy has been a completely different experience than Grimm expected.

Grimm said, "the relationship-building has been unexpected." While there is a lot of communication through email and the format of learning is non-traditional, relationships continue to be built. Furthermore, Grimm is witnessing some great learning. "The parent involvement and learning beyond the classroom has been exciting to watch." The

key to success in online learning has been parent interaction. Grimm described the parent as the assistant teacher. "For this to be successful, there must be a strong family support system."

She recalled one animal project where a student and her grandpa put a little camera into an animal habitat to observe the animal. "This is something that would not have happened if the project were done in the classroom," reflected Grimm.

Another positive finding has been the benefits that self-pacing has allowed. In the classroom, more advanced students would have to wait on students who needed more time to grasp content to move forward. This format allows these students to move at a faster pace. Conversely, those students who need more time, have it. The pace is very individualized.

We are currently collecting data to determine the necessity or viability for Online Academy beyond pandemic times. Regardless of the outcome, we have learned a lot this year.



Students enjoy hands-on learning as part of the Dover Online Academy.