



Dunlap School District #323

December 2021

DUNLAP DISPATCH

Connecting Dunlap community and schools

Dear Dunlap CUSD #323 Community,

I am excited to have the opportunity to share with you a glimpse into the great things that are happening at all of our buildings. The Dunlap School District is viewed as the educational leader in downstate Illinois with the various awards and recognitions we have received. That leadership is not only for our academic prowess but also the vast offerings that we have for our students through extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations.

Facing uncertainty and countless obstacles over the past year and a half, it is clear that the partnership between our schools and families is strong and committed to providing our students with the best opportunities to learn and grow. In March of 2020, our district was able to have a seamless transition from in-person to complete remote learning. Last year, we found ourselves creatively tailoring schedules so we could operate in-person and remote learning simultaneously, all while needing to follow ever-changing restrictions and guidelines. In light of all this, staff and families were understanding and remained focused on our mission--again, I want to extend my most sincere appreciation and gratitude. I was confident we would persevere through the challenges and we continue to work through different challenges up through today.

It is without a doubt that all our administrators, teachers, and support staff are happy to have nearly all our students back to in-person learning as we know it will allow us to meet the needs of all our students. On the first day of school this past August, it was great to see all the excitement and anticipation as students eagerly arrived to schools. Connecting with parents in October during Parent/Teacher Conferences continues to solidify the bond necessary for a successful school district and behalf of the school district, I want to thank all families who were able to engage and hear about how we can work together to help each student. If you were unable to attend, I hope you take the opportunity to reach out to your student(s) teacher(s) with any questions you may have to help support at home.

The world we are sending our students into each year is not the world we once knew. Dunlap CUSD #323 will continue to impact the world by molding the leaders of tomorrow and making our world a better place for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Scott Dearman

Scan the QR Code to check out the
Dunlap School District website.



OUR MISSION

Empower all
students to reach
their individual
potential

2021-2021 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Abby Humbles

President, Term: 2021-2025
ahumbles@dunlapcUSD.net

Ms. Theresa Holshouser

Vice President, Term: 2019-2023
Email: tholshouser@dunlapcUSD.net

Mr. Tim Wagenbach

Secretary, Term: 2019-2023
Email: twagenbach@dunlapcUSD.net

Mrs. Ann Henry

Titles: Term: 2019-2023
Email: ahenry@dunlapcUSD.net

Mr. Tom Feldman

Term 2021-2025
Email: tfeldman@dunlapcUSD.net

Mr. Mike Wisdom

Titles: Term: 2019-2023
Email: mike@wisdomdevelopment.com

Mrs. Andrea Huizenga

Term 2021-2025
Email: ahuizenga@dunlapcUSD.net

Happy Anniversary!

Ridgeview Elementary School celebrates its 20-year anniversary while Hickory Grove Elementary School celebrates its 10th! Both schools continue to flourish today and have nearly doubled their enrollment since opening.. Happy Anniversary to both school communities!

Wilder-Waite's Spook Spectacular Changes with the Times

As they prepared to celebrate the 70th annual Spook Spectacular, the focus changed from strictly a fundraiser to an experience that all of our students could participate in and enjoy. While fundraising still occurred, students were able to enjoy a fully “spirited” week. The joy of including every student in this time honored Wilder-Waite tradition changed the event for the better and the 71st annual event was just as amazing.

Dunlap Valley would like to offer a big thank you to the Spartan Boosters and the Finch Companies for their generosity and collaboration with the Outdoor Space for students. See the professional image for their space below.



Hickory Grove staff celebrates the official opening of their outdoor classroom.



Ridgeview Elementary School under construction nearly 20 years ago.



Wilder-Waite students walk the outdoor trail as part of the Spook Spectacular.

Learning Outside the Classroom Walls

Outdoor learning is more complex than simply learning outdoors. Research shows it promotes the development of problem solving skills, creativity, and confidence while also supporting emotional, behavioral, and intellectual development for all students. Several Dunlap schools are creating outdoor learning spaces to create these rich experiences a reality for students. At Hickory Grove, Ridgeview, Wilder-Waite, and Dunlap Valley Middle School, immense amounts of collaboration between parents and family has made dreams of outdoor space a reality. Each school's outdoor space has its own unique look with features such as garden areas, outdoor pavilions, shaded outdoor gathering areas, and student seating. None of these wonderful spaces would be possible without the partnership between the families and school! Time, talent, and treasure have all been donated in each school to create these beautiful outdoor learning classrooms.

Goal #1: Promote growth and achievement in the Dunlap School Community.



Dunlap Ranked #1

Congratulations to the Dunlap community for earning high rankings with the prestigious Niche Best Schools ranking. According to Niche, Dunlap School District Ranks #1 Best School District in Peoria area and #21 in the entire state!

Scan the QR Code to learn more about what makes Dunlap #1 according to Niche.



DUNLAP ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Growth and achievement do not end at graduation. In fact, Dunlap Schools seek to create lifelong learners. Because of this, in each Dunlap Dispatch issue, we plan to feature alumni who have carried on Dunlap's tradition of excellence beyond their career as a Dunlap student. Use the QR code below to nominate a Dunlap Alum who contributes to the betterment of society and upholds Dunlap's values.



If you would like to nominate a Dunlap Alumni to be featured, please scan the QR Code.

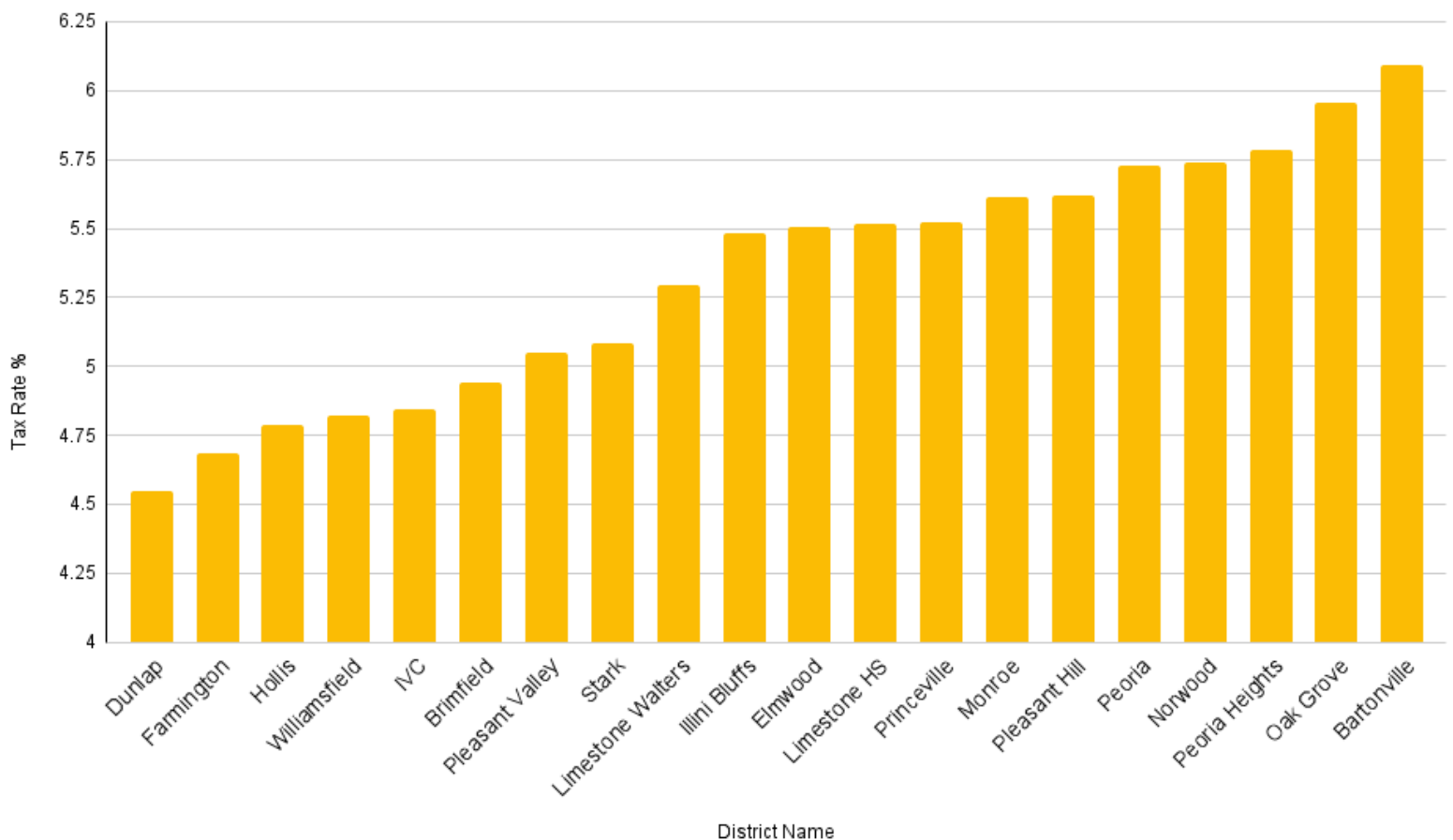
Achievement Marches On

Many preliminary nationwide reports forecasted dismal student performance on standardized assessments as a result of the pandemic. To respond to this, Dunlap ensured that all students received a quality educational experience focused on building skills and knowledge while learning remotely. Students took STAR Reading and Math assessments (either virtually or in-person) in order to monitor whether on-grade level learning targets were achieved. In fact, no statistically significant change was seen throughout the 2020-21 school year and fall data is showing the same trend as well. This speaks highly of the collaboration of staff, families, and students to continue achieving at such a high level even during these atypical school years.

Goal #2: Manage resources in a responsible, efficient, and effective manner.

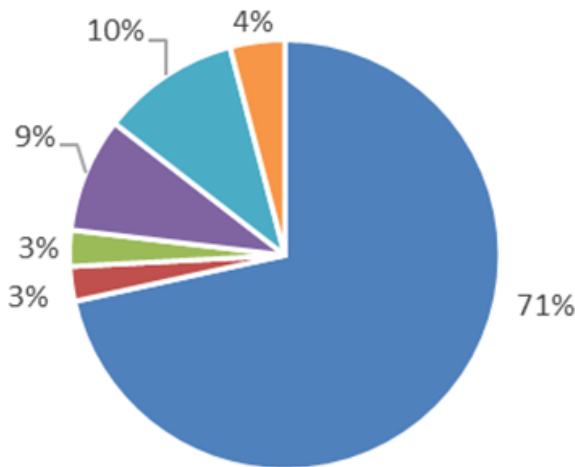
Niche Ratings vs. Tax Rate

Dunlap has the lowest tax rate in Peoria County, and is also ranked #1 School District in Peoria County, according to Niche. This chart displays the tax rates of neighboring school districts in Peoria County,



Dunlap School District Funding

We are a district dependent upon our taxpayers and the funds they pay to support our schools. Thank you to our taxpayers for funding almost 3/4 of what our schools are able to do for our kids!



- Property Taxes
- State Grants
- Federal Sources
- Replacement Taxes
- Evidence Based Funding (GSA)
- Other

Early Childhood Program

Early childhood education programs that were once staffed by an out-of-district co-op, are now all fully staffed and run by the Dunlap School District student services department! This supports financial excellence while also ensuring the high-quality teachers and programs we expect in Dunlap. Dunlap Grade School and Wilder-Waite both welcomed the addition of the Early Childhood programs to their campus and love seeing the smiles of the littlest learners each day.

Preschool students and teachers start the day together at Wilder-Waite.

Facility Upgrades

When schools are out, our district resources go towards upgrading facilities. Dunlap Grade School installed new 4th and 5th grade lockers, fresh painting and updates to all student restrooms, and more.

Thank you to our amazing custodians and maintenance crews for their hard work!

DUNLAP SCHOOLS
STRIVE TO BE



WELCOMING INCLUSIVE
DIVERSE EQUITABLE

Goal #3: Provide a challenging and positive learning environment in the pursuit of excellence.

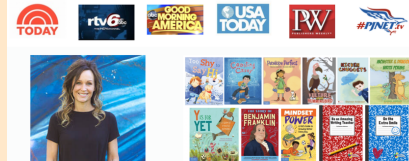
Learning During a Pandemic

During the 2020-21 school year, Dunlap implemented innovative plans to offer remote-only sections of each elementary grade level as well as courses at the middle and high schools. The curriculum department supported the tremendous work of the teachers by providing numerous opportunities for professional development. In addition, Social-Emotional Learning became a major focus of the district curriculum. Dunlap CUSD #323 was one of few school districts to have minimal disruption to the educational process thanks to the tremendous collaboration among the curriculum department, technology department, and teachers efforts with our 1:1 Technology Initiative that allowed all students to have a touchscreen Chromebook.

Fostering a Love of Literacy

Readers are leaders and Dunlap schools encourage literacy every step of the way. Thanks to generous funding from PTO, Banner welcomed guest author, Shannon Anderson, who visited for two days in November. She held small assemblies with our students, provided professional development in the area of writing for our teachers, met and interacted with each grade level showing students how engaging and fun writing poetry can be. In addition, staff at Ridgeview participated in a professional development opportunity that highlighted the importance of texts with diverse representation. Staff was given \$100 each to have a “Diverse Books Shopping Spree” to purchase high-quality texts with diverse characters.

SHANNON ANDERSON - AUTHOR, EDUCATOR, SPEAKER



Author Shannon Anderson

Dunlap Values Inclusivity

Students in both the Life Skills and Pathways classrooms enjoyed a trip to the T-Rex Exhibit at the Riverfront Museum. In addition, two of the elementary schools upgraded their playground equipment to create a space to play that is inclusive of all children, even those with mobility issues. Banner PTO purchased nearly \$100,000 worth of new playground equipment that is ready to be installed. At Dunlap Grade School, the Parent's Club purchased and installed a new ADA accessible Gaga Ball pit on the playground.



Dunlap Grade School parents, students, and staff assemble an ADA accessible Gaga Ball pit.

Goal #4: Foster partnerships to benefit the overall school community.

Instilling Generosity

Evidence of instilling the value of generosity abounds throughout schools in Dunlap #323. Dunlap Middle School kicked off its Panther with a Purpose Service Day within the past two school years. Students collected pledges to sponsor their involvement in service projects throughout the Peoria area. One school day, each student and staff member at Dunlap Middle School went to various locations to serve their community. Students volunteered at schools, nursing homes, fire stations, food pantries and more! Banner Elementary School displayed a great deal of kindness and generosity through their outpouring of donations. In November of 2020, they collected over 3,100 boxes of macaroni and cheese to support The South Side Mission. Families also donated \$5,827 to support The Children's Home of Peoria and a large number of diapers and wipes to support Almost Home Kids in Peoria. At Dunlap High School, the St. Jude club members raised money all year for the children of St. Jude through sponsorships from local businesses and activities including car washes, basket raffles, candy sales on Halloween, bake sales, and pajama days at the elementary schools.

Congratulations!

Mandy Ellis represented the State of Illinois as a National Distinguished Principal at the 2021 National Association of Elementary School Principals Conference after being recognized as the 2020 State of Illinois Elementary Principal of the Year. Katie Cazalet won the Athletic Director of the Year Award from the Illinois Athletic Director's Association. Dunlap is lucky to have you both to serve our community!

Mrs. Ellis receiving the award for National Distinguished Principal.



**Katie Cazalet,
Athletic Director of the Year**



Dunlap High School St. Jude Club



Dunlap Middle School students serving during Panthers with a Purpose Day.

**WE
NEED
YOU!**



SCAN ME

Dunlap School District is in great need of employees for the following positions: cook, classroom aides, crossing guards, custodians, bus drivers and monitors. Call the district office at 309-243-8700 or scan the QR code above for more information.

HOMEcoming 2021

DHS Homecoming week was a great Success! With the theme Dunlapalooza, students celebrated a music festival theme including a fantastic parade, pep rally and then capped off the week with a dance outdoors under a large tent.

