

MAKING WAVES AT DCS



Dexter Community Education

Serving not only Dexter students, but the entire Dexter community

The Dexter community offers many ways for kids, adults, families and seniors to connect with one another, whether it be participating in an after-school theater class, getting in some laps at the Community Pool, relieving stress with a restorative yoga class, or shooting hoops in a youth or adult recreation league. Did you know most of these fun recreational and educational programs are made available by the Dexter Schools Community Education Department?

Many people might not realize just how many programs are offered through DCS Community Education. After-school enrichment classes such as Brick4Kidz and Mad Science, as well as youth league/travel sports and beginner's sports/fitness classes are available for school-age children. Adults can participate in rec league sports, family dog training, yoga or boater safety classes, just to name a few.

The Dexter Community Pool offers open swim, lap swim and senior citizen swim times during the day and, when staffed, swim lessons and lifeguard training. Community Education also provides after-school care, as well as no-school day special programs, for school-age children in young 5 through sixth grade.

During the summer, DCS staff runs Camp Dexter, a traditional day camp for children currently in grades in Young 5/Kindergarten through 5th grade, which operates for nine or ten weeks each summer. Dexter School District families can apply for need-based scholarships for most of Community Education's programs, ensuring that no student is barred from participating for financial reasons.

When Dexter was still a village, its revenue stream was too small to provide enrichment and recreation programming for its residents. DCS became the central hub of this programming for all youth and adults residing within the Dexter Schools District area (which includes Dexter and 8 other municipalities). The community education program was created to be a self-funding initiative, where fees charged for classes/leagues cover the program's expenses, plus a small

percentage of administrative fees for DCS management of scheduling, facility overhead, maintenance, etc.

As Dexter has grown, and the number and size of non-profit clubs running programs through Community Education has increased, expenses have grown as well. Revenues paid through Community Education for these club-based programs are turned over to the volunteer organizations, but the snowballing expenses are no longer being fully covered by these clubs; the District must seek other funding sources to support these programs, such as increasing participant fees.

In addition to the Wylie Community Pool and fields/facilities for sports, DCS also operates a publicly-available theater auditorium seating over 800 people. CPA expenses are funded through the District budget, and outside groups can rent the space for public events such as concerts, plays or large group meetings. Ticket revenue for these outside events go to the group, and the District receives the rental fee; and the cost of maintaining the facility.

Unlike many communities, the city of Dexter does not have a formal community-wide recreation department. As a result, DCS Community Education provides all recreational and educational programming for the community using DCS facilities such as the pool, fields, gyms, meeting spaces, etc. The limitation of facilities and funding for adult programming has led community members to travel to other cities in search of these opportunities (i.e adult sports leagues). In the same way, families are driving their children around SE Michigan to find indoor facilities like Legacy Center Sports Complex in Brighton and other indoor spaces not accessible to the entire Dexter community.

In the nearby city of Saline, community enrichment and recreation programs such as those provided by DCS Community Education are funded by a combination of city general fund dollars and the CARES (Cultural Arts, Recreation, Enrichment and Senior Citizens) recreation millage. Youth and adult sports leagues, recreation and enrichment programs are abundant, provided by Saline's Parks and Recreation department through the Saline Recreation Center.

From the [City of Dexter Parks & Rec 5-year Master Plan](#) (pg. 26):

“The Dexter Community School District budget for recreational facilities and programming is allocated between community education programs, the community pool, league sports, and summer recreational programs. The City’s relationship with

the Schools is to supplement, but not duplicate, many of the activities and facilities provided by the Schools. Community sports clubs and non-profits also provide youth recreation services with separate budgets.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is concerned that Dexter's population growth is putting a strain on the availability of school facilities that are provided for active recreation activities, such as baseball and soccer fields. As the population in the Dexter area continues to grow, the residents of the City will be limited in the amount of time that they will be able to use the school facilities, and therefore shift the demand for recreation back on the City and its minimal facilities."

Also, from the [City of Dexter Parks & Rec 5-year Master Plan](#) (pg 40):

"The School District is the major source of active recreation programs and facilities. Aside from the yearly team sports that they provide for the students, the schools provide a Community Education Department that facilitates a wide variety of activities for City and School District residents of all ages. For example, they offer basic sports programs, aerobics, arts and crafts courses, martial arts classes, swim lessons, and many other activities. These are all operated with user fees.

The Community Education and Recreation Department also hosts many events each year, including craft fairs, auctions, Dexter Wrestling Club, Dexter Little League Baseball, and parties for community groups. The Dexter Community School District has built three (4) new schools over the last twenty years; a middle school, two elementary schools and a new high school, and the former high school was retrofitted to an intermediate school for 5th and 6th graders. Additional parks and recreation facilities were provided at each new school and old facilities were retrofitted as necessary."

From these two sections of the city's Parks and Recreation master plan, one can see just how much the DCS Community Education department provides for Dexter and the surrounding communities.

Dexter Community Schools is proud to offer these services and facilities to the Dexter community. Opportunities for children to learn a new sport or explore an interest, adults to connect through rec sports leagues or educational classes, and seniors to enjoy an active lifestyle fit well with the District's mission of encouraging and developing each student's individual abilities, skills, and character, and shaping tomorrow's world through positive relationships.

