

Superintendent Update – Upcoming Community Presentation

Fri, Apr 15, 2022 at 1:30 PM

Dear DCS Families,

This week, a publication from Dexter Community Schools, Making Waves, was mailed to households throughout our community. Making Waves is filled with stories about DCS classrooms, and DCS students, and staff who make our school district such a wonderful place for students. We hope you find these stories heartwarming and informative. As a community school district, we're so happy to be moving out of this pandemic and engaging again with our community in continued support of our kids and each other. Making Waves is just one example of the types of communications we will continue to provide to our community to highlight the incredible work of our educators and students.

Speaking of district publications, April 15th is World Art Day, which celebrates the fine arts and promotes awareness of creativity worldwide. Attached to this message is the 2022 edition of **DreadNotes**, our arts magazine. It showcases visual arts, music, drama, and speech & writing at Dexter Community Schools.

As part of our commitment to dialogue and communication, **DCS is hosting a Community Presentation and Discussion on Wednesday, April 27th at 7:00 p.m. in the Mill Creek Cafeteria**. This will be an in-person community presentation and discussion focused on two primary items. The first is to discuss the recently approved **DCS Strategic Plan for 2022-2027**. Second, the DCS Board of Education began discussion on Monday regarding a community recreation millage. Information on this potential proposal will be provided during this meeting along with time for discussion and questions on both the Strategic Plan and the Recreation Millage concept. Information on both items is available on our website at <https://www.dexterschools.org/district/board-of-education> with more details below.

Strategic Plan Background Information: The previous district strategic plan was designed and implemented from 2015-2020. As a district, our strategic plans have engaged all stakeholders in their design and are not just plans that are symbolic. Instead, our strategic plans are intentional and results-driven. For example, between 2015-2020, the strategic plan yielded a series of important changes to benefit the students of Dexter and the entire community. Here is a short, but not exhaustive, list of initiatives at DCS as a result of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

- The expansion of early childhood services to begin serving six-week-old babies through preschool at the Jenkins Early Childhood Learning Center.
- The transition of our DCS campus to include the 2017 Bond Proposal and:
 - the construction of Beacon elementary;
 - flexible furniture in all schools;
 - construction of the Ceriani Building on Shield Road;
 - changes in traffic flow across our campus for both vehicles and pedestrians through the construction of the roundabouts and the pedestrian crossings;
 - the building of the twin turf fields at DHS;
 - the construction of the quad fields at Creekside;
 - the construction of flexible learning spaces in all K-8 buildings.
- Creation of support programming to increase the DHS Graduation Rate from as low as 90% to nearly 99% through:
 - The creation of the Dexter Alternative Education Program
 - The implementation of a graduation coach system of supports
 - The creation of the Dexter Early Middle College
- Creation of personalized learning opportunities throughout the district such as the Pinnacle, Apex, and Summit pathways in grades 5-8 and Spark experiences.
- Innovation throughout DCS:
 - Expansion of Place-Based learning in partnership with our community 1:1 technology at all grade levels
 - Innovative instructional practices throughout DCS
 - The EMU Explorers Camp
- The creation of two-way international exchange programs that include hosting students from around the globe and our students traveling to schools around the globe.
- Mental health and social emotional learning support expansions throughout the entire school district including community book studies and expanded services.
- Expansion of reading and math intervention for students.

In late 2018, the district partnered with a national nonprofit organization, KnowledgeWorks, to assist with the development of the next DCS Strategic Plan. That process included surveys of all stakeholder groups, focus groups throughout the district, walk-throughs of classrooms in buildings and resulted in a formal opportunity analysis of our school district. This opportunity analysis was presented publicly to the school board, parent/community groups, and internal staff/students.

Over the next several years, over seventy individual group meetings were held to develop this proposed strategic plan. The groups included students, teachers, staff, parents, board members, and community members. The groups ranged from those focused on a single initiative area to large groups meetings at the Creekside Innovation Room and via zoom in the evenings to create long-term strategic directions and goals.

A strategic plan is a living breathing document where strategies continue to evolve based on successes and changes in the environment. The strategic initiatives and goals provide direction and accountability to moving the organization forward. The [2022-2027 DCS Strategic Plan](#) charts a course to move forward beyond the pandemic as we continue to Champion Learning: Develop, Educate, and Inspire! Please join us on April 27th to learn more about the DCS Strategic Plan and what it means for kids and our community.

Recreation Millage Background Information: The [Recreation Authority Act 321 of 2000](#) provides for the establishment of recreation authorities a municipality, school district, or combination of two or more municipalities or school districts to bring a ballot proposal to voters of not more than 1 mill for a period of 20 years on all of the taxable property within the territory of the authority. The Recreation Millage can be used, in the case of a school district, to pay for community recreation, construction/maintenance of recreation facilities, and programming for district residents. Locally, Saline Area Schools, Whitmore Lake Public Schools, and Lincoln Consolidated Schools have a recreation millage.

Currently, the activities permitted to be funded by a recreation millage are paid 100% by participation fees to DCS Community Education and other local groups. In addition, the DCS Senior Center operates with over 80% of their funding from a variety of grants and personal donations. Based on community interest, the DCS Board of Education began discussions about a potential recreation millage for the Dexter Community. Over the past several years, various entities in the community have conducted surveys, focus groups, and studies (i.e. Dexter Community Fund, Dexter Senior Center, Dexter Community Schools) and all have demonstrated overwhelming community interest in supporting Dexter seniors, community activities, activities for kids, and a desire for a community center.

On April 27th, an opportunity to learn about the [potential recreation millage](#) and discuss the concept will be provided as part of the Community Presentation and Discussion.

On behalf of Dexter Community Schools, I'd like to personally thank you for your continued support and dedication to our community. It's been years since we were able to host a public community discussion, in person, and I hope you're able to join us on **Wednesday, April 27th at 7:00 p.m. in the Mill Creek Cafeteria**. I'm looking forward to sharing the exciting plans for our schools over the next five years and discussing the potential recreation millage with members of our community.

Thank you for your continued support and Go Dreads!

Sincerely, Christopher Timmis, EdD
Superintendent

P.S. As always...Beat Chelsea!

Attachments:

 <messages/attachments/55df12067e2f6930cd48c5952e6afdc/DreadNotes2022.pdf> (4.1 MB)

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