

My child attends: (check one box)	A1. The school offers a challenging, rigorous curriculum.	A2. The school is focused on academic achievement, setting high expectations for students.	A3. The academic program includes a wide selection of course offerings.	A4. Teachers meet my child's needs by including a variety of teaching strategies and activities.	A5. Teachers assign high-quality homework that supports learning.	B1. The academic needs of my child are recognized by staff.	B2. My child receives additional help as needed.	B3. My child receives additional challenges as needed.	B4. Support staff, including educational technicians and literacy and math strategists, help meet the needs of students.	B5. My child's emotional needs are understood and properly addressed.	B6. (For parents of students receiving Special Education services only) Special Education services meet the needs of my child.
DURHAM											
1 Strongly Agree	50 36%	55 39%	39 30%	66 46%	36 26%	65 46%	64 50%	45 33%	61 47%	51 37%	15
2 Somewhat Agree	41 30%	49 35%	29 22%	44 31%	43 32%	40 29%	40 31%	42 31%	35 27%	38 27%	10
3 Neutral	27 20%	19 14%	41 32%	14 10%	27 20%	15 11%	7 5%	24 18%	18 14%	20 14%	2
4 Somewhat Disagree	14 10%	11 8%	16 12%	13 9%	17 13%	13 9%	9 7%	19 14%	8 6%	18 13%	5
5 Strongly Disagree	6 4%	6 4%	4 3%	5 4%	13 10%	7 5%	9 7%	7 5%	7 5%	12 9%	4
Total	138 100%	140 100%	129 100%	142 100%	136 100%	140 100%	129 100%	137 100%	129 100%	139 100%	36
Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree no N/A's	91 66%	104 74%	68 53%	110 77%	79 58%	105 75%	104 81%	87 64%	96 74%	89 64%	25
Somewhat Disagree/Strongly Disagree no N/A's	20 14%	17 12%	20 16%	18 13%	30 22%	20 14%	18 14%	26 19%	15 12%	30 22%	9

My child attends: (check one box)	B7. (For parents of students receiving Gifted and Talented services only) GT program meets the needs of my child.	B8. The school provides excellent support services (guidance, nursing, mentoring, college planning, etc.).	B9. My child learns life skills such as managing time, prioritizing, meeting deadlines, responsibility, and communicating clearly.	C1. The school offers a broad range of co-curricular activities (drama, etc.).	C2. Students have access to a wide selection of sports through the school's athletic program.	D1. The atmosphere at school is positive and conducive to learning.	D2. The school encourages students to show respect for each other.	D3. Adults who work in the school treat students with respect.	D4. Teachers have built strong relationships with my child.	D5. I feel welcome at my child's school.	D6. Parents have opportunities to participate in school activities.											
DURHAM																						
1 Strongly Agree	42%	11	32%	62	46%	38	28%	42	32%	46	35%	73	51%	82	58%	84	60%	71	50%	79	57%	43
2 Somewhat Agree	28%	11	32%	34	25%	43	31%	42	32%	41	32%	35	25%	44	31%	31	22%	43	30%	28	19%	39
3 Neutral	6%	6	18%	28	19%	30	22%	28	20%	20	15%	15	11%	6	4%	12	9%	13	9%	20	14%	28
4 Somewhat Disagree	14%	3	9%	5	4%	18	12%	13	10%	11	8%	14	10%	6	4%	7	5%	10	7%	7	5%	13
5 Strongly Disagree	11%	3	9%	7	5%	11	8%	7	5%	12	9%	5	4%	4	3%	5	4%	4	3%	7	5%	12
Total	100%	34	100%	134	100%	138	100%	130	100%	130	100%	142	100%	142	100%	139	100%	141	100%	139	100%	135
Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree no N/A's	69%	22	65%	96	72%	81	58%	84	65%	87	67%	108	76%	126	89%	115	83%	114	81%	105	76%	82
Somewhat Disagree/Strongly Disagree no N/A's	25%	6	18%	12	9%	27	20%	20	15%	23	18%	19	13%	10	7%	12	9%	14	10%	14	10%	25

My child attends: (check one box)		E1. Staff handles discipline fairly, consistently, and effectively.	E2. School staff have a positive impact on students' behavior.	E3. Staff proactively educates students about the impact and prevention of bullying.	E4. Teachers manage classroom behavior effectively.	E5. Behavior expectations are made clear to students.	E6. The school tells me about behavior expectations for my child.	F1. The school is safe and orderly.	F2. The school is clean and well-maintained.	F3. The school reflects the pride taken in educating our students.	F4. The school provides quality teaching/learning materials and technology equipment.										
DURHAM																					
1 Strongly Agree	32%	45	34%	61	43%	47	34%	45	33%	66	47%	58	42%	97	70%	115	82%	97	68%	94	66%
2 Somewhat Agree	29%	35	27%	40	28%	42	31%	39	29%	48	34%	42	30%	28	20%	12	9%	28	20%	34	24%
3 Neutral	21%	18	14%	23	16%	28	20%	23	17%	13	9%	24	17%	9	6%	12	9%	13	9%	10	7%
4 Somewhat Disagree	10%	23	17%	11	8%	12	9%	23	17%	9	6%	8	6%	3	2%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
5 Strongly Disagree	9%	11	8%	6	4%	8	6%	6	4%	5	4%	6	4%	2	1%	1	1%	3	2%	3	2%
Total	100%	132	100%	141	100%	137	100%	136	100%	141	100%	138	100%	139	100%	140	100%	142	100%	142	100%
Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree no N/A's	61%	80	61%	101	72%	89	65%	84	62%	114	81%	100	72%	125	90%	127	91%	125	88%	128	90%
Somewhat Disagree/Strongly Disagree no N/A's	19%	34	26%	17	12%	20	15%	29	21%	14	10%	14	10%	5	4%	1	1%	4	3%	4	3%

My child attends: (check one box)	G1. Administrators and teachers communicate with parents/guardians effectively.	G2. I have opportunities to share my views about the school.	G3. Teachers and administrators are responsive to my concerns and suggestions.	G4. I feel comfortable talking with my child's teacher(s).	G5. Teachers respect agreements and decisions reached at parent teacher meetings, and follow-up on those suggestions.	G6. Teachers help me understand how my child's work is evaluated.	G7. When reporting about my child's progress, teachers use language I can understand.	G8. The school helps me understand how to best support my child's learning at home.
DURHAM								
1 Strongly Agree	62 44%	46 33%	57 41%	98 69%	62 47%	60 43%	94 67%	61 44%
2 Somewhat Agree	43 30%	37 26%	35 25%	25 18%	39 29%	42 30%	32 23%	36 26%
3 Neutral	17 12%	30 21%	20 14%	10 7%	19 14%	21 15%	8 4%	20 14%
4 Somewhat Disagree	13 9%	14 10%	16 12%	6 4%	9 7%	12 9%	7 5%	15 11%
5 Strongly Disagree	6 4%	14 10%	10 7%	3 2%	4 3%	5 4%	2 1%	6 4%
Total	141 100%	141 100%	138 100%	142 100%	133 100%	140 100%	141 100%	138 100%
Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree no N/A's	105 74%	83 59%	92 67%	123 87%	101 76%	102 73%	126 89%	97 70%
Somewhat Disagree/Strongly Disagree no N/A's	19 13%	28 20%	26 19%	9 6%	13 10%	17 12%	9 6%	21 15%

Durham Community School - Comments

Please share with us your suggestions for improving our schools:

Please allow parents to make the decision to have their children wear masks. My child is uncomfortable during the school day with a mask on and I feel their learning and social needs are not being met because they cannot see their teachers faces and mouths when teaching. They are not able to see their friends smiles and facial expressions. Seeing the entire face of a teacher and friend is crucial in the development of children. It is time that RSU5 stops the mask mandate and let's children learn and play without a mask.
Everything is good
Homework for 7th/8th grade doesn't reflect proper preparation for high school homework load. The biggest gap seen from middle school to high school transition is this homework issue. We have found from experience twice now, our students are not prepared for this and spend Freshman year struggling to navigate this issue. It's like training for a 5k running race and then find one's self in the midst of a marathon.
Do not tell children from Kindergarten on that incorrect spelling does not matter. My child is in 6th grade and still issues with spelling. I was even told in 4th grade parent teacher meeting after reading my child's final draft of a story full of misspelled words even in the title. I asked why that is allowed and they said they don't worry about the spelling. Only want to focus on how to write. When I grew up any mis-spelled word would be red underlined so you were forced to learn the correct spelling. 6th grade... when asking about it it's still shrugged off as not a problem. Crazy
Are 8th graders getting enough homework to prepare them for high school? Are they developing the study habits needed? I also think school sports should consider cuts.... taking all of the kids is frustrating for those kids who know the rules of the games. Perhaps a rec team for those still learning fundamentals would be appropriate.
DCS principal apparently doesn't believe in homework and has requested teachers don't give it. My 8th grader RARELY has homework which is setting her up to fail for high-school. My 3rd grader gets a packet that he usually refuses to do and he isn't held accountable at school. Its hard as a parent to convince your child they have to do something that the school is holding them accountable for. Let's get back to providing a REAL education and stop letting the snowflakes be so worried to hurt feelings. Also- keep your thoughts and feelings about gender out of the school. Stick to the science and get back to a real health class. Teachers also need to handle situations at school. Emailing me because YOU let my 3rd grader slip an Expo marker outside at recess and he proceeded to draw on his face with it? That is a you problem, not something that needed to be reported to me. Student led conferences are lacking. I don't feel like I'm getting an accurate sense how my child is actually doing in each subject. Turns out she is quite behind in math but her teacher last year didn't report any issues so it went undetected. Since the conference is led by my daughter and no details were given to her adviser, we didn't know. If we want our child's take on how they are doing, we can ask. Our real concern is how the teacher feels they are doing and what their real life grade is.
Stop taking funding that requires you to mask children. Take a real stand against mandated masking in schools and do not require masks, make masking optional. The school needs to advocate for more than just the physical health of children (having two nurses does not make you a medical facility), but also their mental health and their education. Students have not had a proper education in two years, and the children are suffering because of adults that live in fear. The school has been a safe place all along, and never once was a super spreader. Tell your staff to stop forcing their personal beliefs and political beliefs on my children, and to stop publicly shaming my children in class for not agreeing with them. My children's vaccine status is none of their teachers business, so I'm not sure why it was asked of them during class. Do my children get to ask their teacher if they have had a certain medical procedure done? No, because it's none of their business. Retrain your staff on what bullying is and how to handle it, because I shouldn't have to contact the school to ask them to stop a child from bullying my kid about their beliefs. I shouldn't have to find out that a teacher cheered on and applauded the student who was bullying my child in class. Find a superintendent that won't tell us to go to another school when we seek support for our children. All of the children deserve better than they have been treated in all of this. And provide more emotional support for your staff because they are all either fearful, burnt out, or angry, and guess who is directly affected by all of that...it's the children who absorb it all.
I'd like to see more time mgmt, logging own HW assignments in a planner, more responsibilities for the kids. We're only in gr 5 so maybe this comes later?
The lack of homework at the Middle School level seems like a disservice to those entering high school. The Middle School level should have a little more freedom versus the elementary levels. This will be a very drastic change for them when they enter High School.
I think for many of the questions in this survey, parents wouldn't have the appropriate insight.
Communication, particularly during this pandemic has been excellent. We would enjoy and benefit from a few more check ins with our daughter's kindergarten teacher to hear about her successes, improvements and progress and to have the opportunity to ask questions.
More awareness with the older grades of respect and not allowing bullying. At young ages DCS is incredible fostering that awareness and positive support and it really shows. I love what I see. When older, I know teenagers are tougher too, but I think that there is not as much focus on the importance of positivity and not allowing certain kids to get away with maybe disrespect to teachers, other students, etc. I know it is hard to manage a bunch of 7th or 8th graders, but I do feel more attention can be given, knowing the importance of it overall, and also the clear vision and focus Mr. Pidden and the whole team cares about creating and fostering. They do a great job, it's just harder when older of course.
Stop forcing masks on children! Focus on their education and stop indoctrinating personal views. Being proud of the country we live in should be taught since many men and women have died for it. The students should see the pride a teacher has when leading the pledge to our flag. They should not feel a sense of restraint from their teacher for requesting to pledge nor should they need to remind a teacher to lead in the pledge. The pledge should be done over the speaker every single day before classes start. Why the school thought doing it any other way would be better is only allowing teachers to try and slowly stop the pledge all together.
Why doesn't the school do a "flag" day and discuss the importance of our flag and why we stand when we pledge? We have special days for things much less important. Why not our American flag?
The covid protocols need to be revised. This mask thing needs to go. I think we all know it, but aren't saying anything. They're detrimental to our children's cognitive learning abilities, they don't protect from covid, and they're providing a false sense of safety. The superintendent or whoever needs to use their discretion to make a better decision. Everything was fine with RSU5 until these ludicrous, fear inducing, hypocritical protocols were introduced by people who can't think for themselves. The RSU5 staff needs to change this.also, stop sending out the covid newsletter. I'd bet almost no one reads it, and you're regurgitating useless information.
School staff needs to communicate with the parents regularly. They need to make sure parents understand words and terms used in IEP meetings. They need to take the parents opinions seriously in meetings and listen to suggestions of the parent as the parent knows the child the best. School special education staff need to make sure they communicate specific tests that are being done and educate parents on why the evaluation/test is being conducted. School staff need to inform parents what staff are working with the child and why. Parent rights need to be gone over in a school meeting to ensure a parent knows their rights.

More effort towards the prevention of bullying and homophobia would be great.
Provide more spaces for students to enjoy recess when the weather prevents outdoor activities.
I have 2 kids at DCS- Follow through with things that are said to be done. Many times I hear "we'll do this and get back to you" and this rarely happens. One of my sons was receiving help in 2nd grade- only for COVID to strike and he completely fell off the radar. Not impressed. College planning in high school needs to also involve parents. My son is now in college- but FHS was zero help with my son navigating this very difficult transition. He was on his own- and perhaps if guidance meetings involved parents- it would be a much smoother process.
Following the science... its time to unmask the children! Masks do more harm than good!
Making it more open to talk to all my child's teachers and not just the advisory teacher. Having the teacher need to respond to the parent's email. Making sure all the teachers on the child's team follow IEP requirements.
providing pre-k children with the services that are in their IEP's... Also providing speech, ot, and/or behavior support for kids that are struggling
Nothing that I can think of!
None at this time
I have no suggestions at this time.
Better staffing
DCS is a wonderful school for my kids, and opportunities for improvement are scarce. I would like to hear more often from my kids' teachers, but I understand time is a very finite resource for them. If there were more ways to create clear touch points for communication (I know a big part of this is us reaching out) I think that would be helpful for us.
None
Take discipline more seriously, some kids in my child's classes are loud and distract others, there is bullying going on in the 7th and eighth grade towards younger students
Encourage more reading at home. Give more homework to my eight grader please.
The kids need to be able to go without masks. They need time outside if masks aren't going to be optional. 15 minutes in a 7hour period is not enough. Outside learning and peer interaction is where life skills are learned. We have many beautiful outside amenities built last year, we should be using them! Would love to see a more aggressive athletic program offered before kids get to high school and it's completely different than they are used to.
The covid protocols have created a negative impact on learning. As CDC guidelines change about quarantine, you've changed. But as evidence changes about the poor effectiveness of masks, you don't change. The teachers have become much more emotional and their political views are becoming very clear in their lessons. Their emotional fears of Covid-19 are very clear in the classroom conversations. Teachers are very poor at establishing and communicating due dates on assignments. They show poor understanding of the school calendar making last minute changes because they just realized there is MWEA testing or no school. One even made an assignment due earlier. Sport choices are very limited unless you're willing and able to transport your child to Freeport. The teachers and administrators are frustrated with the pigeon hole disciplinary rules. It doesn't allow them to take into account the circumstances of a situation and instigator vs responder. Many times the victims punishment is far greater than the bully because of this. Teaching of history doesn't exist. You concentrate on the emotions of the past vs the facts. In 8th grade, my child has no concept of historical timeline and facts. You need to bring back memorizing addition, subtraction multiplication and division facts. Learning as they go is poor and choppy. They still need a calculator for basic math in 8th grade. You need to bring spelling back. Relying on autocorrect is foolish. Waiting to teach basic grammar until 7/8 grade is way to late! I am so tired of having to teach my child about run on sentences, the proper selection of there/their/they're, and how to properly write a letter or email. Please stop with the woke, hard left political agenda. Remove masks from kids and follow the science. Stop focusing on race. Kids are at school to learn not to have political opinions forced upon them. The Superintendent's constant sharing of stories that she deems racist never have anything to do with school. It is unnecessary and inappropriate for school employees to scold the public on things that did not happen in or have anything to do with school or school related activities. As a parent I often feel as though the board of RSU 5 and those in charge make closed door decisions that deeply affect the day to day life and learning of the students and do not appear to make any effort to gather parent input. The communication is often one way with the board telling the community of parents what is going to happen. There is an overall tone that there is no desire to hear what parents want...the school knows best. Parents are the tax payers. They should have more opportunities to give input. A better way to socialize during lunch time. The high school allows students to face each other and socialize during their lunch break

<p>I don't think that the middle school aged students are being taught how to manage their workloads, plan for future events or time manage. I suggest a unified strategy for 6th through 8th grade that ALL teachers use. Google classroom is not enough! I'm worried that my child will not have any strategies to pull from when they arrive at High School. Also, PLEASE ban all websites and applications that are inappropriate for students to access via their laptops. Adults who work in the business world cannot go to work and spend all day on YouTube and not get fired. I don't believe we are teaching enough electronic etiquette and I'm sure it would be easier for teachers to not have to police this during the school day. Some examples of sites to ban: Discord, Roblox, Fortnite, most YouTube channels. It's a gross misuse of tax payer dollars for kids to have free reign over these devices, and it would extend the lives of these devices if they were properly managed. DCS needs to add more social opportunities for middle school students and stop hiding behind the covid excuse. There are plenty of safe opportunities for kids to have fun and interact socially and this needs to be done without involvement of the K-5 students. When parents make suggestions about how to improve DCS, it is never met with anything but dissection. I would like you to listen, take feedback, and understand the needs of our town that have changed drastically over the past 2 years. Other districts have parent advisory committees which give parents the feeling that their input is valued. I can't see you participating in something like this without taking offense, but it should be done.</p>
<p>I'm not sure that teachers fully understand standards based learning, let alone communicate it back to parents. I'm not sure how this can be done, but it's definitely an area of improvement. Please expand extra curricular options without always needing to travel to Freeport. There is a reason that I live in Durham, I don't want to always have to go there for everything. We have our own town! It's very different than Freeport. I realize this survey does not include Community Programs, but there should be a survey sent out about how much can be improved upon there (a lot!). Please also stop integrating so many political issues into school, especially ones that don't exist in our community. A random act of violence/racism in Freeport has absolutely nothing to do with promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in our schools. I was offended by Becky Foley's recent newsletter mentioning this random event. It makes me think that she doesn't know the first thing about promoting equity in our schools. Providing equal access to both academic, athletic and social opportunities so that everyone is playing on the same field is what DEI is actually about. If the school thinks they can make money by renting out already strained athletic fields to "play to play" sports organizations, they should rethink their approach to DEI. These organizations degrade access to sports for the under privileged and RSU5 and Community Programs should not be associating with them.</p>
<p>Communication from teachers regarding performance, what students are working on in the classroom and in peer relationships and how they can be supported both academically and emotionally could be more frequent, such as weekly or bi-weekly instead of monthly or less.</p>
<p>Allow students a 20 minute window to enter the school, 8:10 to 8:30 allowing students to get breakfast on their way to homeroom. Why wait till 10 am? Then have a snack at 10 am and lunch at noon...have a monthly assembly to teach kids its not ok to bully and that there will be consequences if they bully others. Stick to the consequences when kids bully and don't let any form of bullying go unpunished! Reward those who help others. Don't punish those who are getting bullied.</p>
<p>Remove the mask requirement; stop ignoring science and reality. Focus less on the emotional state of my child and more on academics. Stop trying to be family to my child. Stop selectively teaching my child about other countries. China participates in slavery, genocide, organ harvesting, espionage and many other atrocities daily. Stop teaching my child about religions you don't understand. Stop having kids participate in Yoga, are you not aware yoga is prayer? My child has been taught more about other countries than than their own. Stop Social Studies, start Civics.</p>
<p>Reach out to Maine CDC to unmask our children. It's doing more damage than good, and follows no science WHAT SO EVER! Stop snapping at our kids to social distance. My child is literally developing a complex and gets anxiety about going to school because of it.</p>
<p>Class sizes seem to large to properly meet my child's academic learning and emotional well-being.</p>
<p>Administration: I was told vaccine requirements are required for summer care programs, despite clear evidence that the vaccine does not prevent getting or spreading covid. Mask mandates have been proven to not prevent contracting or spreading covid. It's high time for kids to get maskless, or at least lift the requirement for it. I was told that you have followed CDC guidelines from the beginning and that wouldn't change now, despite plenty of data showing its lack of success. Stop segregating our kids. Do some research and stop blindly following guidelines that have no base! Please. Our kids are depending on you. The flu has a higher death rate and our worlds weren't turned upside down for that. This has to stop. We hoped, when moving to Durham, we'd be getting away from the illogical rules pushed by agendas and government. I know the government makes it difficult to go against the grain, but we need some common sense. Durham and Freeport are heavily vaccinated and yet we have all of these cases. Why are we still pushing these vaccines and boosters when people are still getting it. Please look into antibody dependent immunity, and tell me why you think it a good idea to continue to enforce vaccines in kids. Very disappointed</p>
<p>I would like the mask policy revisited and voted on by parents. It is detrimental to children and they are at a low risk for severe illness with Covid. Recently RSU5 announced children 5+ would need to be vaccinated to participate in summer camps. This is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is discriminatory and hurtful to the children that will miss out. More questions and opinions need to be asked of Parents. We have been patient too long!!!</p>
<p>I have been increasingly frustrated with how bullying behavior is addressed at DCS. I support the work that teachers are doing to ensure a safe classroom environment. I believe teachers need more support when dealing with students that repeatedly disrupt the classroom and do not keep their hands to themselves.</p>
<p>I would welcome parent teacher conferences that are not student lead and that allow for more of an open dialogue between parent and teacher.</p>
<p>Parents should have more of a voice as to what class their child is placed in.</p>
<p>I would also love for students to have more opportunities to loan books from the library.</p>
<p>Child deficiencies should be able to be addressed at school and not have to be classified as primary, secondary, etc; and then denied services because they do not rise to a primary need. A deficiency is a deficiency. Especially when identified early enough, and addressed early enough, will lead to much better outcomes later.</p>
<p>Our kids desperately need to be able to see their teachers and peers faces again. They need to be able to hear instruction clearly, they need to be able to sit with their friends again, they need to know that they are seen and heard and are more than vectors of illness. Please be a leader in Maine and Discontinue masking for the social, psychological, and mental well-being of our kids. My heart literally breaks every morning as I send them off to another long day at school masked. It's too much and has gone on too long. This is dividing families, dividing friends, stirring up strife and turmoil within communities and schools. We have to live our lives again and put these mandates behind us. Parents need to once again be put back in charge of the health and well-being of their children. Masking and vaccines need to be optional and at the parents discretion. Staff and students who want the vaccine have already had it and many adults and children alike have had Covid and now have natural immunity. We MUST move forward. If we do not move forward my kids will no longer be attending school in RSU 5.</p>

Ensure Durham has as many after school activities (via RSU5CP or otherwise) as Freeport. Many of the CP offerings are only after school at MSS or MLS
While I understand this is a difficult time, I have contacted the school nurse a handful of time and have not received calls back.
Get a new superintendent who takes their job seriously and not as a joke...my 9 and 10 year old kids shouldn't be coming home telling me they are learning about sexual things like 89. That should BE LEFT UP TO THE PARENTS TO EDUCATE!! This rsu sickens me and because I'm stuck in this town my children have to suffer because the superintendent has a power trip and won't allow my kids to get the education they deserve!
Behavior expectations need to be more consistent.
I truly love DCS and I believe we are fortunate to have Will and Kelly as the shepards of our school. I currently would appreciate seeing the masks disappear. That is my biggest gripe right now.
I don't get feedback on how to help my kids be successful until Parent Teacher Conference
We need to make masks optional. Let parents make the best choice for their child(ren). Focus more on mental health
You are doing a great job, any limitations seem to be due more to Covid but you are navigating those well
Younger students in pre k or k are still in a developmental phase and I think the school is a bit rigid in their expectations of such young children. Some teachers seem very stressed and overwhelmed.
Overall we love DCS, but the teacher one of our children is assigned to this year doesn't seem to be challenging or even really getting to know our child. Our kids are young, and getting to know them in school is important to a child's success. It's heartbreaking as a parent to feel like the teacher isn't really invested. Especially as a parent who also teaches and knows the impact that can have.
I think the school is wonderful and most of the teachers have exceeded our expectations. My daughter has been bullied in her class though, over and over, but her teacher hasn't helped to diffuse the situation. That is my ONLY negative view of such a great school.
The pre-k program specifically: I think the expectations of children's behavior are way too high. I believe the school social worker should be involved in processing children's behavioral issues as they transition into school settings for the first time. I have had numerous emails about my child's behavior in pre-k, and the teacher then singled out my child and had them say they were sorry or act out the right thing to do. In my option, it is too high expectations for 4 year old children that are not developmentally able to express their feelings by anything other than acting out. I think involving the school social worker to assist with these incidents would be beneficial so children do not feel shamed when they are only expressing their feelings at their developmental level.
Lacking proficiency in math and reading, can be directly attributed to a differing focus. My perception of this school district, through its actions and words, show more concern with social engineering of its students than academic achievement. Very often, this year, my child has come home discussing major societal issues with strong opinions on those issues, that are missing important context and information. I find it highly inappropriate, especially for her age, especially when children are far more reliant on feelings than logic and facts. At the younger ages, children should be focused on a foundational education in reading, writing, and math. Having to explain the differences between responsible forestry management locally, and deforestation of the Amazonian rainforest are to say in the least, complicated.
While there are improvements in the educational styles of teaching, I am frustrated to have been told that children don't need to memorize facts or numbers, just the processes. As all of the information in the world is at their fingertips. This is grossly concerning in today's world full of falsehoods. We should be preparing our children to be able to think critically and independently, and not be reliant on what they are told. My child should know how to find the information to her questions, not just ask Alexa what the answer is. If the past 2 years have shown us anything, it's that we as a society are not capable of independent thought and are complacent on doing/thinking what we are told. Just because our proficiency numbers make it look like we have a very successful education system on the state level. Nationally they are below par.
Please make mask wearing optional and not mandatory. Children are suffering.
I would like more focus on mental and physical health. Disappointing to see the gym space was cut in half due to additional eating space needed. In this era of physical activity being reduced I think it is important to make the space for that a priority. I would also like to see more division between the middle school and elementary levels. The same school rules apply to the children from the pre-k to 8th grade. Open campus lunch/recess, more diversity in classes offered additional sporting opportunities etc.. These are things I would like integrated at the middle school level.
Accountability for ever student needs to be equal
Mask masking optional
Is it possible to provide more executive functioning skills to all students? Perhaps you are doing this and my child hasn't yet learned them. I'd love to see more electives (or modules) around science and technology to engage many of the boys. I realize that, at the middle school, it may not be realistic.
Better literacy title 1 help
The elementary and middle schools need to teach grammar, letter formation and spelling. In addition, discipline needs to be consistent and recess supervisors need to pay attention to what is happening rather than simply listening to the squeaky wheel.
Let us in.....i know covid is hard but also hard to answer some of these questions if I cant come in the school. I dont want to sub all day. Just volunteer during classroom events.....hard to answer cleanliness if I can see it....
Making sure kids have enough time to eat after waiting in line and don't have to throw food out.
I would encourage teachers to de-emphasize punitive and time-out based consequences in the classroom, as these are not effective behavior modifiers and can elicit feelings of shame especially in sensitive children.
Individual teachers, rather than just the advisor, should have a meeting with parents at least once a year. I don't find the system of meeting to just have my son show me his work is very helpful. I still have a problem navigating the system that supposedly shows my son's assignments and/or grades. It should be more user friendly.
Make masking optional

Please share with us one or more things we are doing well:

The teachers and staff are amazing at DCS. It is obvious that they truly care about their students.
All my kids enjoy school
DCS is a strong, positive, community oriented school.
Thank you for not going to remote learning this year.
My wife and I moved to Durham primarily so we could send our girls to DCS. At no point have we been disappointed in that decision. We are consistently impressed with the level of care and consideration the teachers and staff show for our children. The approach to education is much more effective than what I grew up with and I feel that DCS is setting my girls up to succeed in life. I completely trust that my girls are safe and cared for at DCS and I can't think of a higher compliment I could give. Thank you for everything!
The COVID quarantine and notifications are being handles much better currently.
The school is open for in-person learning.
My daughter loves school and all of the staff that she sees throughout her day.
DCS has continued to rise to whatever challenge is presented whether its covid, academics, etc. We are 110% happy with all of the teachers we've had and other staff. My children happen to be in GT program and continue to be challenged in both their regular classroom or the GT room.
The school has done a really great job managing the spread of covid and keeping our children safe and in school.
Elementary level academic accomplishments are honored and encouraged.
My kids look forward to going to school each day. DCS is fantastic!
Creating a warm and welcoming space with a focus on excellent education, an outdoor focus, and a clear recognition of the importance of physical and emotional health.
Everything for the most part. I have no concerns or complaints, and if I did I know the DCS team would be responsive. I have never seen a more committed and interactive/integrated team as I see there at DCS, and love the education and opportunity they have provided for my two kids throughout their years there. The school is top notch in terms of cleanliness, attitude, support, and learning, and I feel my son being in 8th grade is more than prepared for FHS, which is all you can ask. The people there are polite, like what they are doing, and clearly truly care about those students, and as a parent I couldn't be more pleased!
Amazing job managing the COVID pandemic and keeping our kids safe. Thank you.
Keeping the building clean.
Miss Baker and Mrs Alden rock!
school staff try to have good relationships with the children.
Overall, the level of education and support has been amazing. Your efforts during this pandemic are hugely appreciated.
The support your teachers provide for our children is above and beyond expectations.
The enrichment program in Durham runs much smoother now than it did in the past.
Just this morning I had a meeting with Caleb and Ms. Leding because Caleb is struggling at home to use the skills/information he had just learned in the classroom. Any time I email anyone at the school I hear back within 24 hours and my concerns are addressed, validated and responded to.
Na
Once the team understood my child's needs they did respond and start to listen to what he needed. It only took multiple unanswered emails and a couple months to get this to happen. The teachers really do care about the children they teach and my child is happy most of the time.
I have been so impressed with my child's teachers and their commitment to learning and keeping parents updated. Last year my child had some mild behavioral struggles that Ms Baker handled incredibly well.
We are thrilled with our experience at DCS. I also love the seamless coordination with RSU5 Community Services for after school care and activities. Mrs. Barrett has provided a wonderful first experience for our kindergartener and she also loves all of her "specials" teachers. I especially love Forest Fridays, that outside learning and play time is so important for this age group and I'm sure it's extra work for her classroom but we really appreciate it. I love the school's commitment to safety around the pandemic while also reevaluating procedures as situations change. The administration and support staff is communicative, welcoming, and thoughtful. We volunteered one day and the classroom was orderly yet warm and fun. Only good things to say here!
I love the variety of programs available for after school
As a parent of a pre-k student, I feel welcomed into the school community. Every single person I have interacted with who works for the school has been so kind and happy to help. I appreciate it.
Trying to stay open!
Encouraging involvement in activities outside of school (sports, art, etc)
DCS is amazing - Mr. Pidden & Ms. Rogers are fantastic. We have a young child at DCS and every teacher he has had since (and including) PreK have exceeded our expectations. In such an insane time to navigate school for the first time we're pleased to say that our experience has been whole heartedly positive. Keep up the great work, we're beyond blessed to raise children in this school system :)
Your covid protocols and communication have helped my wife and I feel that our kids were safe to go to school. Overall the culture you have promoted and continue to promote at DCS shows in the behavior and attitude of my kids who actually enjoy going to school because of it.

I love the staff and everyone has been working so hard to get us all through the pandemic safely and I really appreciate it.
Teachers are great at communicating what is required on a daily basis
Handling Covid although I wish stop off/pick up could be revamped. Both are cumbersome processes that could be streamlined.
The kitchen, janitorial, bus drivers, and all non-teaching staff are doing a wonderful job. The two women in the office are always cordial and SO helpful with my many calls and questions. Mrs. Triggiani has gone above and beyond to help out my child and reached out to connect without it needing to be a complicated process. Making a school feel comfortable, approachable, and like home, is the best way for all kids and parents to succeed. Whenever there are process or too many steps to use resources, they go unused and feel fake. I appreciate it not feeling like that.
Communication with parents has been great until 7th grade. The teachers are accepting of IEP needs.
It's great that the school realizes recess and time outdoors is a very important part of a child's learning.
I think the anti-bullying atmosphere the staff works hard to promote DCS is amazing. The teachers who are employed at DCS are very dedicated and top quality.
DCS has always been a smoothly running school. Will Pidden does a wonderful job managing the day to day flow of student life. The teachers that my children have had have all been wonderful, hard working people.
We are happy with the polynomials class and GT opportunities for ELA for Lilly.
Debi Bartlett is awesome. She is always helpful and a great problem solver.
I feel the school atmosphere is positive, children have ample opportunities to explore a variety of topics and interests using multiple formats, and respect for others, learning and property is enforced and valued.
Molly and Debbie are amazing, they always have an answer or know where to send you to get an answer. They are very polite and extremely helpful not to mention they always have a smile! Extra-curricular sports are great as well, the rec options are great!
The Communication is outstanding. Especially throughout the pandemic. My child continues to receive the best at DCS. The library is very clean and organized.
Wonder teachers who genuinely care about their students
We love Mrs. Barrett. She's done a wonderful job with Natalie. We can tell she is very kind and patient with her. Mrs. Dodge is also great, Natalie loves her teachers. They have also been proactive whenever I've had a concern, they've taken care of it immediately.
Adults in the building do a great job making positive connections with students.
Teachers do a great job responding to emails.
I love how accessible classroom books are for students.
Mrs. Barrett is awesome!
DCS is an incredible School with the most dedicated, kind, hard-working teachers, staff, and administration. There are not enough words for me to express my gratitude towards all of these wonderful individuals.
I truly think DCS is doing a fantastic job. Covid has made everything a struggle, and people are quick to react (now more than ever). I have always felt able to communicate my child's needs, and have them taken seriously.
You have the best staff. Everyone is above and beyond helpful and delightful.
I'm very happy with the Pre-K program and their ability to resolve issues
NOT A DAMN THING!
Challenging my child to be the best learner he can be.
Constantly reinventing the wheel, but creating a stable, consistent learning environment for the kids. I think our staff is always trying to be creative with how they impact the students.
Really enjoy the school, great experience
DCS is a fantastic school and the reason we moved into this town. Education is so important!
We speak with other parents in other districts and when we talk with them there is a lot of issues with bullying. At Durham community I really have never seen any. I think you do a very good job of dealing with bullying.
We appreciate the values expected at DCS and also appreciate the hard work of all staff in these stressful, unpredictable times.
We love the school, the faculty and staff seem wonderful, and the facilities are well maintained and clean.
I love the relationship that administrators have with the children. I love that generally, staff seems happy to be there and shows that to the students. I like the routine and how things are regulated. The school is always nice and clean and my kids are comfortable being there!
Thank you for continuing to keep my children excited about learning!
The facility is always maintained extremely well. Emotional and psychological resources are a great asset and are a much needed resource. My child feels comfortable going to school and teachers for needs and problem solving. Our school does very well comparatively to many other local schools, therefore it won't take much to take us up to exceed national level proficiency averages.
The school is safe and clean. Children are taught respect & empathy.
The elementary staff that we have encountered have done an amazing job at bonding with our kids.

Great job getting back during covid 19.
Thank you for the positive attitudes during the COVID-19 experience. The friendly teacher and administration faces in the mornings/afternoons during pick-up brightens my day.
My child is happy
The middle school staff is outstanding! They are bringing interesting experiences and topics to the students.
My kids are happy and the school is responsive if I proactively reach out. But I do feel I have to proactively reach out.
I've been so impressed with how hard DCS staff have worked over the last year in making school safe and fun throughout the pandemic challenges! My kids love their teachers and feel supported at school.
Teachers genuinely care about students and their academic needs.

