



Dunlap School District #323

DUNLAP DISPATCH

January 2023

Connecting Dunlap community and schools

Dear Dunlap CUSD #323 Community,

Happy New Year to our Dunlap School District families, staff, and community members! It's amazing how quickly the first semester has gone by! It seems like only yesterday we were preparing for registration and the start of the 2022-2023 school year. As you read and reflect on our accomplishments so far, I ask that you celebrate the strengths of our entire community, and look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2023.

Our student achievement continues to reflect our reputation for excellence. I am proud to announce that both Hickory Grove Elementary School and Ridgeview Elementary School were recognized as 2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools!

Dunlap Middle School and Dunlap High School were also recognized for earning a summative designation of "Exemplary" by the Illinois State Board of Education.

As a District, we are proud of what our students accomplish both in and outside the classrooms. I continue to be proud of all the opportunities offered to our students. It was again a privilege to watch our students perform in the high school madrigal, and the holiday performances as well. From basketball, football, scholastic bowl, cheerleading, and dance, to our band and choir performances and numerous clubs that we offer, our students have access to participate in so many opportunities.

To close, I want to thank our staff for the incredible impact you've had on our students. This includes each and every one of our bus drivers, monitors, custodial and cafeteria staff, paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, and Board members. Without you, our District would not be a renowned and attractive destination for central Illinois families. I'm also excited to share that the District has recently created the Dunlap Shine Award to allow all stakeholders the opportunity to recognize District employees to receive the recognition they deserve. I would urge you to visit our district website, www.dunlapcUSD.net, and click on the "Dunlap Shine Award" link and nominate a staff member who has had a positive impact on your life, or your child's education. Congratulations to Mrs. Rachelle McConaghie and Mr. Joshua Piper who were honored this month with the Dunlap Shine Award!

Sincerely,

Scott Dearman

Dr. Scott Dearman
Superintendent

OUR MISSION

Empower all students to reach their individual potential

2022-2023 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Abby Humbles
President, Term: 2021-2025
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Vice President, Term: 2019-2023
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Mr. Tim Wagenbach
Secretary, Term: 2019-2023
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Mrs. Ann Henry
Term: 2019-2023
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Mr. Tom Feldman
Term 2021-2025
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Mr. Mike Wisdom
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Mrs. Andrea Huizenga
Term 2021-2025
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Goal #1: Promote growth and achievement in the Dunlap School Community.

Celebrating Student Growth in the Classroom...

Student growth and achievement can be found in all corners of Dunlap Schools. During the 2022-2023 school year, Dunlap Middle School earned a summative designation of "Exemplary" by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The summative designation is issued by ISBE each year and takes into account various factors including "Academic Indicators", "School Quality", and "Student Success Indicators". This designation also means that Dunlap Middle School's overall performance was in the top 10% of all schools. Congratulations to Dunlap Middle School staff, students, and families!

Hickory Grove Elementary School and Ridgeview Elementary School have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as 2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools. This distinction was awarded to 17 schools in Illinois out of only 297 schools across the nation. Both schools were nominated by the Illinois State Board of Education under the category of exemplary high-performing schools. It is truly a special occasion having two schools from Dunlap recognized at the national level. The awards were presented to each school at a ceremony in Washington D.C. on November 3rd & 4th.

Congratulations to the Hickory Grove and Ridgeview students, teachers, families, and administrators.



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

Celebrating Student Growth in the Classroom...

In October, the Illinois State Board of Education released schools' summative designations on the 2022 Illinois Report Card. The summative designation describes how well an individual school is meeting the needs of all its students. Dunlap High School received "Exemplary," which is the highest possible designation! In order to be "exemplary," a school must be in the top 10 percent of all schools, must have no underperforming student groups and must have a graduation rate higher than 67 percent. Congratulations to the students, staff and families of the Dunlap High School community!



We continue to be proud of our students' growth and high academic performance, especially in light of the challenges we all have faced over the past couple of years. We appreciate the hard work of our dedicated staff and the support of our Dunlap High School families.



Several members of the administrative team attended the Illinois Principals Fall Leadership Conference in October. During this time, the "Leaders of Hope" attended professional learning workshops and keynote sessions, networked with over 700 other leaders from across the state of Illinois, and spent time learning from each other.

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

The 2022-23 School Year is off to a great start! This year, the Curriculum Department is facilitating two literacy initiatives at the elementary level: a pilot of the *Wit and Wisdom* English language arts curriculum resources and LETRS Training through the Lexia Corporation. As we continue to monitor and evaluate existing curriculum programming and resources across the district, the desire for new materials was clearly part of the ESSER-III Funds Stakeholder Survey results that were administered last fall. In our effort to be good stewards of the taxpayer-funded grant funds, the Department has gone through a methodical process of evaluating all potential resources to be used as the backbone of literacy instruction at the elementary level.

Over 20 educators have signed up for the extensive two-year LETRS Training that focuses on the essential components of reading instruction--phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and language skills. Both the ELA pilot and LETRS Training are focused on the "Science of Reading" research that recognizes the unique ways in which the human brain learns language--be it spoken, read, or written. Empowering our teachers and building their capacity to meet all students' needs will help build collective teacher efficacy which has the highest impact on student growth and achievement.

These first two initiatives are part of the Elementary ELA Resource Adoption Plan that spans three years. A final major component of the plan includes an Early Childhood Education Coordination (ECE) Committee that is charged with creating a vision for ECE in Dunlap School District. This vision and the belief statements will be used similarly to the ELA Instruction Vision statements created last year while evaluating resources and helping to determine what curriculum resources and professional development is needed to ensure we provide developmentally appropriate ways for students to learn all facets of the ECE curriculum. The committee convened its first meeting on Thursday, November 10, and has future dates on the calendar to continue this coordinated effort to help our youngest learners.

At the middle-school level, the Curriculum Council put the finishing touches on the Curriculum Department Three-Year Plan which is focused not only on completing our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) work to ensure that learning is consistent among our middle schools to allow for professional dialogue about the agreed-upon learning expectations but also to ensure objectives are transparent and accessible to all students. The Dunlap High School Instructional Leadership Team will be completing the same shortly. At the November 11th SIP afternoon, middle-school teachers completed the Curriculum Evaluation Tool to evaluate curricular programming at the middle-level; the high school will follow at the March Teacher Institute Day. The results of the survey will be used to place whole-group and department-level professional development needs to ensure that, like our elementary teachers, they, too, are given up-to-date professional learning opportunities to help meet the needs of all students, in all subject areas.

The Curriculum Department is devoted to empowering all our students to reach their individual potential and is forever thankful for the strong partnership with our families that makes this effort possible.

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

Wilder-Waite Grade School welcomed 30 veterans on Veterans Day at a school-wide assembly to honor our past and present veterans. Dunlap Mayor Jack Esterdahl opened the event with remarks about the gift of freedom and sacrifice. Mr. Bruce Stewart, a Korean War Veteran, followed and shared a personal story and poem reading. Boy Scout Pack #254 led the Presentation of Colors. A huge highlight was the Dunlap High School Band and Color Guard who performed the United States Military Medley to individually recognize each branch and the veterans in attendance. Over 75 veterans' names were read to honor our Wildcats' family members. During the weeks leading up to the assembly, a "Wall of Honor" was created with photos and stories of each veteran. There were also artifacts on display for a "living museum." 4th and 5th Grade Essay/Poem winners shared "What Freedom Means to Me". To conclude, the entire 5th Grade Project Impact led the singing and signing of "America the Beautiful." We are extremely thankful for all of the veterans who traveled and spent their morning with us. We are forever grateful for their service and appreciate the opportunity to make special connections within our Wildcat family.

Dunlap Grade School is thankful for the return of volunteers within our school community. Our school benefits from our volunteers in so many ways. Mrs. Luebbers conducts a weekly Harry Potter Club after school where fifth graders engage in learning activities related to Hogwarts! The Huntington Family spearheads a weekly running club for our older students that promotes healthy habits and engages other parent volunteers to run at DGS and on the Rock Island Trail. Long-time volunteer, Gladys Martin became a Royal VIP by coming back to donate an entire day each week to work with students in small groups on science and art activities to promote positive rapport and relationships! Our Parents Club Organization continues to plan events to support our staff and students. They have already hosted numerous staff luncheons, a scholastic book fair and neon Royal Ball and dance. It truly takes a community to do the work we do at DGS and we're thankful for all our volunteers!



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

All Dunlap Elementary Schools participated in Unity Day on October 19, 2022. Unity Day encourages students to wear orange as they unite for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion to send a visible message that no child should experience bullying. This day was facilitated by the elementary counseling team and included a variety of lessons, discussions, and activities!



A Playground For All Students



The Banner playground has been completed! Thanks to the work by CORE Construction, the Banner playground has been upgraded to one that is inclusive to all children. Our students had the privilege of watching the old one get demolished and the new equipment installed. They were so very patient throughout the process and are finally able to enjoy it!



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

On school improvement days, our preschool programs host family fun days. In September they were able to tour the Dunlap Fire Station. All of our students had a great time and it was a wonderful experience for everyone! We thank the Dunlap Fire Department for teaching our students about Fire Safety!

The Special Education Advisory Committee hosted the Second Annual Resource Fair. The Resource Fair was designed to connect parents with the resources in the area to provide information on area agencies and businesses that will be able to help them plan for the future of their loved ones with disabilities. We welcomed 38 vendors and enjoyed a very special performance by *The Penguin Project*, a community nonprofit that provides a supportive environment for children with disabilities to explore their creative talents



Pathways Program Partnerships

The Pathways Transition Program at DHS has been busy taking on new adventures out in the community. Each week they learn about a different job and visit or interview a person in that job title.

Most recently, the Pathways group was able to visit the Dunlap Transportation Department to learn about car care. Ryan Bowald, our district's assistant mechanic demonstrated how to check tire pressure and change wiper blades. Brad Schoolman, the district's mechanic showed students the hydraulic lift and they were able to see the underbody of a vehicle.

Students also took a trip to Hooked on Fishing in East Peoria to learn the parts of a fishing rod, how to cast, and baiting a hook. What a great catch! Students visited Purple Panda Preschool to learn about what education and job skills are needed to be an Early Childhood teacher.

Community partnerships strengthen student experiences and the work that goes into planning, preparing, and leading the students in these meaningful outings is very appreciated.

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

Dunlap Students Partner With Bradley Men's Basketball Team

Dunlap Valley is excited to partner with the Bradley Men's Basketball team in conjunction with the *Stay in to Win* program, sponsored by the NABC. The partnership provides an opportunity for Valley students to continue to seek and develop the "Keys to Students Success", while prioritizing a focus on school. According to the *Stay in to Win* philosophy, "The National Association of Basketball Coaches recognizes that the game of basketball allows for effective correlation between being successful on the court and achieving success in life. *Stay in to Win*, uses the game of basketball as a tool to communicate the importance of staying in school and succeeding by graduating. Using basketball terminology, students incorporate determination and teamwork into their strategies for achieving academic, career, and personal success."

On September 23rd, Bradley players and coaches visited Dunlap Valley for an all school assembly to provide a message of overcoming adversity and establishing positive life habits. Students will have the opportunity to meet with players in small group environments, visit the campus, work through the *Stay in to Win* guidebook with players, and attend Dunlap Valley Night on February 15th for the Bradley vs. Missouri State basketball game.

The partnership has allowed our students to interact and connect with college level athletes who share their experiences while highlighting their abilities to persevere and overcome obstacles. Dunlap Valley is looking forward to partnering with Bradley Men's Basketball, and knows this will not only be a great opportunity for our students, but will also benefit the college athletes involved in the mentoring program.



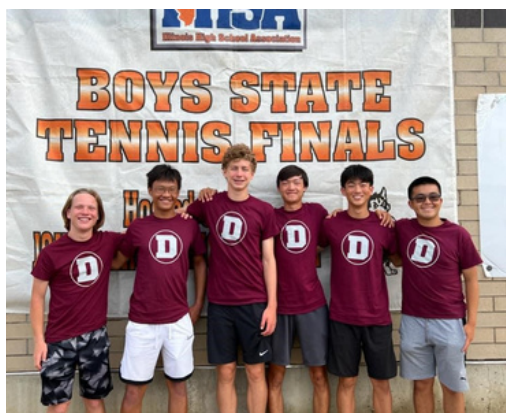
Students Thrive With Extracurriculars

In October, Dunlap Middle School celebrated Red Ribbon Week! Students engaged in a number of activities to promote a positive school culture, prevent bullying of their peers, and avoid drug and alcohol use. Students watched and discussed videos, engaged in Mix-it-Up Day activities, and played trivia about bullying and drug abuse. The DMS Student Council made and distributed over 600 red ribbons to promote the spirit of the week. A special thank you to the DMS Parents' Club for sponsoring incentives, the DMS Student Council and Mrs. Erin Copple for helping promote throughout the week, and Mrs. Beth Schaller, school counselor, for organizing an impactful Red Ribbon Week!



The Dunlap High School St. Jude Club raised \$14,000 during the 2021-2022 school year for the children of St. Jude. The members volunteered their time for several activities throughout the year, including JFL concessions, car wash, bake sale, raffle baskets, Black Out night, Halloween candy sales and Pajama Day at the grade schools.

The Dunlap High School Boys' Tennis team finished 3rd in the IHSA Class 1A State Finals. Congratulations!!



A big thanks to all of our business partners and for all the support from the Dunlap community.



The Dunlap Eagles Girl's Basketball team placed 3rd in the 43rd Manual Holiday Tournament. Congratulations!!



Congratulations to our Dunlap Shine Award Honorees!



MR. JOSHUA PIPER

English Teacher
Dunlap High School

"Josh has taken on numerous roles at Dunlap High School. First and foremost, he is an awesome and innovative teacher in the classroom, introducing new ideas in unique ways to his students and capturing those moments for the school and community to see. Second, he has been a great help to me as a leader of the department. I may have the title, but he has helped me immensely with the myriad of situations that arise throughout the year. Third, he is a great coach. He is an assistant cross-country coach at Dunlap Valley and an assistant track coach at the high school. He has immersed himself in coaching each sport and stepped up where necessary (we were short bus drivers to get teams to meet, he stepped up and got his bus license to help out). Finally, he continues to seek out opportunities to improve himself. He teaches online classes, attends and presents at conferences, takes on student teachers, and is pursuing his next degree. All his hard work should be recognized by this district."

-Chris Friedman (nominator)



**WE'RE
HIRING**

Please scan the QR code to view the current job openings within our district. For questions please contact the Human Resource Department at (309) 243-8700



NOMINATIONS

To nominate a staff member please go to our website www.dunlapcusd.net and click on the "Dunlap Shine Award" link.



MRS. RACHELLE MCCONAGHIE

Second Grade Teacher
Wilder-Waite Grade School

"Mrs. McConaghie is everything anyone could want in a teacher. She is selfless, caring, and willing to do whatever she needs to do to help her students. When you witness what she does day in and day out, the love she has for her kids is so apparent. Her love for kids radiates from her and becomes infectious to all those around her. Mrs. McConaghie is an inspiration to her students, her colleagues, and to our district. I cannot think of a better teacher to recognize for the Dunlap Shine Award."

-Jeremy Conlee (nominator)

