What Is the Foundation for Dansville Education?

For more than a decade, the Foundation for Dansville Education has quietly worked behind the scenes to provide opportunities for Dansville Central Schools students, support educators, and strengthen the connection between the school district, its alumni and the greater Dansville community.

But what exactly is the Foundation, and what does it do?

The Foundation for Dansville Education, Inc. is a nonprofit organization established to enhance educational opportunities for children and youth in the Dansville Central School District. Founded in 2011 and officially recognized as a nonprofit in 2014, the organization began with a small group of community supporters who wanted to raise funds for educational opportunities that might otherwise fall outside the school district's regular budget.

The Foundation’s Mission is to enhance educational opportunities, celebrate the achievements of our students, graduates, educators, and community members, and foster a lifelong connection to our schools. The Foundation seeks to enrich educational experiences for the children and youth of the Dansville Central School District. As a proud partner with our small, rural community, the Foundation works to foster a culture of excellence and pride.

Since its founding, the Foundation has helped fund more than 60 grants supporting academic, extracurricular and enrichment opportunities for Dansville students.

Supporting Ideas That Go Beyond the School Budget

One of the Foundation's most important roles is its mini-grant program.

Throughout the school year, Dansville Central Schools staff members can submit proposals for projects, programs and materials that enhance the student experience but may not be covered through the district's regular budget. The Foundation reviews those requests and provides funding for projects that align with its mission.

Over the years, that support has reached students at every grade level and in many different areas.

Recent projects have included the elementary school musical, DCSD’s Therapy Dog Program, support for the district’s STEAM program including drone building kits and Sphero coding devices, Page Turners T-shirts, the Rise Up & Run program, the Farm to Table Greenhouse Project, a middle school attendance challenge, percussion equipment, Pre-K Winter Festival supplies and a senior class trip.

Previous grants have supported programs such as bike safety, archery, sewing and crafting, robotics, music trips, instrumental repair equipment and the Mustang Market.

While some grants may be relatively small, their impact can be significant. A set of supplies, a piece of equipment or funding for an activity can give students an experience they otherwise might not have had.

“The Foundation for Dansville Education played an enormous role in making our elementary musical program possible. When we launched the program, the Foundation funded nearly all of our original production costs. That support allowed us to take an idea and turn it into an opportunity for our students that we simply could not have provided at that scale otherwise.

Since then, the program has grown to include over 100 students, giving children the opportunity to perform, work behind the scenes, build confidence, make new friendships, and discover talents they may never have known they had. Some of my favorite moments are watching students who may not always find their place in athletics or other traditional school activities suddenly find somewhere they truly belong.

The Foundation has continued to support us as we’ve grown, including donating $1,000 last year to help provide a production shirt for every participating student. It may seem like a small thing, but those shirts mean so much to the kids. They give every student something that identifies them as part of the cast and crew and a keepsake from an experience they worked incredibly hard to create.

The Foundation’s support goes far beyond funding a school musical. They helped us build a program, create a new tradition in our school, and give hundreds of students experiences and memories that will stay with them for years. I am incredibly grateful that they believed in our vision from the very beginning and continue to invest in opportunities for Dansville students.”

-Heather Lee, Elementary Drama Club Director

"Without support from The Foundation for Dansville Education, many initiatives at the 7th and 8th grade level would have gone unrealized over the past few years. The mini grants have allowed for recognition and celebrations regarding attendance and positive behaviors. By continuously supporting these essential culture-building programs, the Foundation ensures that Dansville’s 7th and 8th graders don't just receive an education, but experience a supportive, thriving school community by boosting student morale, engagement, and school culture."

-Julie Drollette, 7th & 8th Grade Counselor

"We were able to utilize the Dansville Foundation to purchase T-shirts for our Rise up and Run team members, including coaches. The girls worked together to create designs and held a vote to decide, providing an opportunity to work together and create ownership of their design. The t-shirts allowed the girls to look and feel like a cohesive team. It also allowed them to show off their pride and dedication to their group while running in the Dogwood 5-K."

-Jayme Wadsworth, Rise Up and Run Co-Advisor

Celebrating Students, Alumni and Community

The Foundation's work extends beyond classroom grants and student programs. It also helps maintain the lifelong connection between Dansville Central Schools and the generations of students who have called Dansville home.

Dansville Alumni Association

The Dansville Alumni Association was established by the Foundation for Dansville Education to help strengthen those connections and provide a way for former students to remain engaged with their school and community. One of its most visible traditions is Dansville Alumni Weekend, held annually during the weekend of high school graduation.

Alumni Weekend provides an opportunity for graduates from across the years to return to Dansville, reconnect with classmates, celebrate milestone reunions and maintain their ties to the school community. Holding the weekend alongside graduation is especially meaningful, as Dansville welcomes its newest graduating class into the alumni family while celebrating the generations who came before them.

The Alumni Association also helps keep graduates connected throughout the year, strengthening a network that spans generations and extends far beyond Dansville. Its work reflects an important part of the Foundation's mission: supporting today's students while preserving the relationships, traditions and sense of community that continue long after graduation.

Wall of Pride

Another of the Foundation's signature programs is the Dansville Central School Wall of Pride, created to honor distinguished graduates, educators, school-community members, benefactors and others with meaningful ties to the Dansville Central School community. Nominees may come from Dansville as well as Sparta, West Sparta, South Dansville, Ossian and other areas that make up the school community.

Wall of Pride honorees are selected for significant contributions and achievements in one or more of four areas: Education/Academics, Leadership/Quality of Life, Community Service and Philanthropy.

That broad criteria allows the Wall of Pride to recognize many different kinds of achievement. An honoree might be a graduate who went on to distinguish themselves professionally, an educator who spent years inspiring Dansville students, a community member whose leadership improved the lives of others, or someone who generously gave their time or financial support to benefit Dansville and its residents.

The process begins with nominations from the community. Applications are reviewed in the Spring, with up to four inductees announced at the High School Graduation Ceremony. Nominations that are not selected during their first year remain active for three years and are reconsidered for future induction classes.

The Wall of Pride is an important part of the Foundation's larger mission because it connects today's students and community with the people who came before them. It demonstrates that a Dansville education can lead in many directions—and that achievement isn't measured only by professional success, but also by leadership, service, generosity and the difference someone makes in the lives of others.

As the Foundation for Dansville Education prepares for the ninth Wall of Pride Induction Ceremony in fall 2027, community members are encouraged to help identify the people whose accomplishments, leadership

and service deserve to be celebrated. Nominations may recognize outstanding Dansville High School graduates, Dansville Central School educators and members of the broader school community whose contributions and achievements have been significant. Nominees are considered for excellence in Education/Academics, Leadership/Quality of Life, Community Service or Philanthropy. Think about the teachers who inspired generations of students, graduates who have gone on to make a difference, and community members whose service and generosity have strengthened Dansville. Their stories deserve to be told. Nomination forms are available at the Dansville Central School District Office, 337 Main Street, on the Foundation section of the district website, or through our Alumni Association Director at dansvillecsalumni@gmail.com. Nominations are accepted through May 1.

Senior Award Scholarship

The Foundation also sponsors an annual monetary award for a graduating Dansville senior to assist with additional schooling, training or workforce pursuits and facilitates several other scholarships and awards.

Together, these efforts reflect an important part of what the Foundation for Dansville Education is all about: supporting today's students while recognizing and preserving the legacy of those who have helped make Dansville what it is.

Where Does the Money Come From?

The Foundation is supported through fundraising and tax-deductible donations from individuals, businesses, alumni and other supporters. Community support is what allows the Foundation to say "yes" to creative ideas proposed by educators and to continue supporting scholarships, student programs and other initiatives.

Those dollars are then reinvested into programs and opportunities benefiting Dansville students and the school community.

In 2025 alone, Foundation fundraising and donations generated just over $25,000, with those funds directed back toward programs and projects supporting DCS students.

A Partnership With the Community

At its heart, the Foundation for Dansville Education is about partnership.

It brings together educators, alumni, families, businesses and community members around a common goal: creating additional opportunities for Dansville's children while celebrating the people who have helped shape the school community.

There are several ways community members can become involved. They can volunteer at Foundation and alumni events, support fundraisers, make a tax-deductible donation or simply help spread the word about the Foundation's work.

As Dansville Central Schools celebrates its 100th year, the Foundation's mission is especially fitting—honoring the accomplishments of students, graduates, educators and community members while continuing to invest in the generations that will follow.

Ultimately, the Foundation’s purpose is simple: to help provide opportunities that allow Dansville students to learn, explore, participate and succeed—and to strengthen the lifelong connection between the school and the community it serves.

For more information, please contact a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors: Kim Birmingham, Chair; Kim Derrenbacher, Vice Chair; Marilyn Robin, Treasurer; Paul Alioto, Secretary; Marcia Miller, Alumni Director; Katie Infantino, Director; Ashton Muchler, Director; Kelly Zimmerman, Superintendent and Ex Officio Member as District Liaison; Tom Frazier, Deputy Superintendent and Ex Officio Member as District Liaison; Dave Moodie, Executive Director of Student and Community Engagement and Ex Officio Member as District Liaison.

Farm to Table 	Page Turners 
EBH Musical 	EBH Musical 
Therapy Dog Program	Therapy Dog Program





Rise Up And Run



Striker Bike Program

