



Photo courtesy of Daniel Soler

ANNUAL REPORT

2020/21



**DOWNINGTOWN AREA
SCHOOL DISTRICT**



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STATE OF THE DISTRICT

From Superintendent Emilie M. Lonardi, Ph.D.

I am so pleased that we were able to start the 2021-22 school year in person, five days a week. We know that students are most successful when they have a consistent and reliable schedule. With the health and safety measures we have in place, I feel confident that this year will be a vast improvement over last.

Instruction during the 2021-22 school year will continue to promote our academic vision of rigor, student engagement and student agency, but will see an intentional, laser focus on student relationships. Our staff will encourage and promote strong bonds with their students as well as cultivate relationships within the classrooms. Our goal is to make sure that every student knows that they have an adult invested in them with whom they can confide and trust.

In addition to relationship building, DASD will continue to address the mental health needs of our staff and students with additional staff, curriculum, new student programs, a departmental audit to identify areas for growth and several community events. We are facing a national mental health crisis and we must continue to be vigilant and to work with our staff and community to recognize and assist students who are struggling. DASD is committed to promoting safe and supportive schools that foster healthy social and emotional development. We invite our entire school community to join us in this endeavor.



***TOGETHER,
WE WILL
MAKE IT
EXCEPTIONAL***

As DASD enrollment continues to grow, we are making plans and preparations for how to meet the needs of our population while minimizing the need to redistrict. Full day kindergarten is on the horizon as we take steps toward expanding our existing schools and investigate new construction opportunities.

Throughout the pandemic, I made an intentional effort to find silver linings. In a year unlike any that I have experienced in my 24 years as a superintendent, I have seen incredible resolve and resilience in our staff, students and community. The 2021-22 school year is beginning much brighter than last, and together, we will make it exceptional.

SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF DASD STAFF AND STUDENTS

DASD has faced significant challenges over the past year and a half. In addition to the general mental health needs of our student population and the impact of the pandemic, together we experienced the tragic loss of four of our school community members to suicide.

While we have persistently dedicated our district to improving mental health curriculum and supports in our schools, we must and will do more. We must come together to end the stigma surrounding mental health and get help into the hands of those who need it most. Amidst this national epidemic, we are committed to fighting; we cannot and will not stand idly by.

DASD appreciates its community's support in promoting a positive, inclusive school culture that celebrates our diverse community and healthy social and emotional development.



CURRICULAR SUPPORT

- Elementary school counselor lessons in all grades K-5
- Mental health education added to health curriculum in grades 7-12
- Signs of Suicide program at Marsh Creek Sixth Grade Center
- QPR Suicide Prevention Training for all ninth graders

STUDENT PROGRAMS

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Student Assistance Program (SAP)
- MTSS systems for early identification of behavioral support needs
- Suicide screenings and assessment K-12
- Review 360 student screenings
- Access to a variety of student clubs that support DEI as well as healthy social and emotional development

COMING IN 2021-22

DASD is reviewing its curriculum, student services and community outreach initiatives and expanding our programming in the following areas:

District-wide audit of mental health services and programming

Second Step (social emotional learning) curriculum, K-8

Review of high school health curriculum related to mental health

Additional peer and staff training in mental health and self-care

Continued community programming through our Speaker Series

Community summer panel with mental health experts

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- Parent Speaker Series
- Community & Student Round Tables
- 2018 Community Mental Health Panel
- Creation of Community Wellness Committee



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



2,200+ (16.9%)
DASD students receive special education services



1,512 (11.7%)
DASD students are from a low-income household

At DASD, we work to ensure that every student is encouraged to succeed and provided the means to reach their highest potential. By focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion and how they directly relate to overall student mental health and wellness, we will address physical and procedural barriers to full inclusion within the district. Effective school-wide strategies that align wellness, inclusion, diversity and equity empower all students to meet their individual and unique goals.

Recognizing that a truly inclusive environment is vital to the wellness and success of all students, teachers and staff, DASD has worked to better serve our diverse population by focusing on improving equity and inclusion, district-wide. To be completely inclusive, all individuals within the district must feel safe to express ideas, dreams and dialogues. Hate, disrespect, intimidation and intolerance have no place in our district or in our community. There must be equal access to and opportunity for everyone to contribute fully.



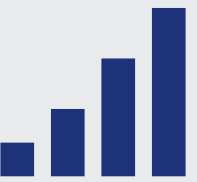
We must acknowledge that many individuals have complex identities in which their experiences have been based on, including gender, race, color, creed, sexual orientation and ability and we must respect these differences.

To learn more about DEI in DASD, visit www.dasd.org/diversity.

Providing a culture of inclusivity and empathy while fostering educational equity that can grow, flourish and reach beyond the DASD community

DASD DEI VISION

Downingtown Area School District will ensure a culture of inclusivity and educational equity. We will strive to take an empathetic approach with our district while creating an environment and culture that investigates core issues and recognizes all cultures and backgrounds.



105.5% 10-YEAR INCREASE
in cultural diversity of the DASD student population

In order to foster a positive environment, the Downingtown Area School District will not tolerate bigotry, bullying, gender-inequities, homophobia, misogyny, racism, transphobia or xenophobia (fear/hatred toward people from foreign countries). Hate has no place in the district or in our community. We encourage upstanding citizens to support our "Good Neighbor" community.



01

EVALUATION

Continuously evaluate our personal commitment and development in the areas of equity, cultural awareness and integrity

02

ELIMINATION

Eliminate educational inequities by providing equitable access to services, school resources and learning opportunities

03

ELEVATION

Elevate our community-wide mutual respect for others and active partnership through open communication, collaboration and actions

BUDGET

YEAR IN REVIEW

For the eighth consecutive year, DASD did not increase school taxes for the 2020-2021 school year, saving residents an average of \$4,000 over the eight-year period, as compared to the Act 1 inflation index. Due to the effects of the pandemic, budgeted revenue from real estate and earned income taxes was anticipated to decline; however, actual revenue remained strong throughout the school year. Stronger-than-anticipated revenue, along with federal grants and responsible fiscal management, allowed the district to sufficiently fund budgeted expenses, as well as additional expenses associated with the pandemic.

COVID-19 GRANT SUMMARY

Personal Protective Equipment - \$828,597
Technology - \$1,414,864
Curriculum, Summer Learning - \$759,306



ESSER II GRANT \$1,234,833	iPads for grades K-4, summer school-related expenses
PCCD GRANT, CARES ACT, HEALTH AND SAFETY GRANT \$621,202	Personal protective equipment, sanitizing supplies, curriculum kits, technology
CARES ACT \$449,950	Personal protective equipment, supplies to clean and sanitize schools
PCCD GRANT \$406,585	iPads for 6 th grade, support for online learning
ESSER Grant \$254,339	Cyber courses, kindergarten screening
SECIM GRANT \$35,858	Addressed skills and/or behavior loss, and/or lack of progress

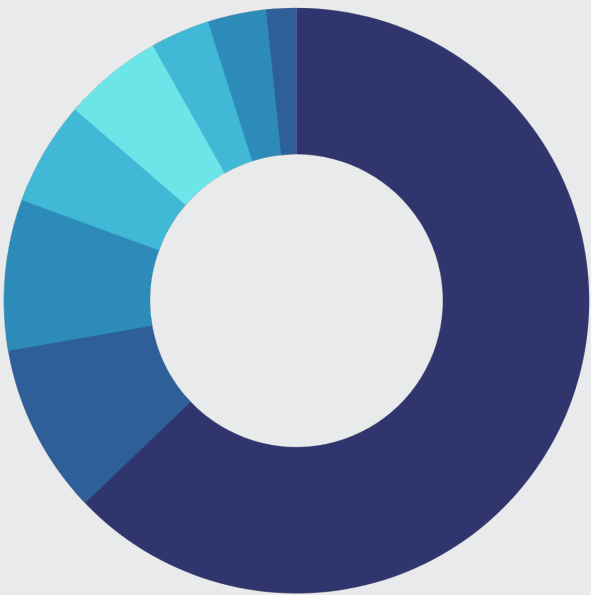
BUDGET

LOOKING FORWARD

2021-2022 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Instruction	\$153,403,371
Operations	\$22,971,130
Instructional Support	\$20,317,888
Administrative Costs	\$14,016,707
Transportation	\$13,439,483
Debt Service	\$8,000,000
General Fund	
Capital Expenditures	\$7,884,200
Transfer	
Extracurriculars/ Athletics	\$4,053,340

TOTAL **\$244,086,119**



The board of directors has approved a two-percent tax increase for the 2021-2022 school year. Additional tax revenue will be targeted toward supporting students through the hiring of guidance counselors, behavior specialists, a home and school visitor, and classroom teachers, as well as creating programming for the Downingtown Cyber Academy. DASD continues to boast the second lowest spending per pupil across Chester County, and was the only district without a tax increase since the 2012-13 school year.

FACILITIES

UWCHLAN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Photo courtesy of Steve Wolfe Photography

The new-and-improved Uwchlan Hills Elementary School welcomed its inaugural class during the 2020-21 school year. The building replaces the previous structure which served as a DASD place of learning for 48 years! The modern facility boasts an innovation lab and a Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) lab, both located in the core area of the building for all students to use, and state-of-the-art energy recovery heating and cooling systems. Natural light and flexible learning spaces make Uwchlan Hills the place to be this school year!



DOWNTOWN STEM ACADEMY

Downtown STEM Academy received a face-lift and expansion, opening its new wings in the fall of 2020. The expansions will accommodate 200 additional students by the 2023-24 school year. The renovations include:

- Introduction of flexible learning spaces, offering a broad range of configurations, from medium-sized assembly arrangements down to small breakout group instruction and individual focus. The three-story atrium provides a large group collaborative space featuring the comfort, flexibility and technical support of a 21st century learning environment.
- 15 new classrooms and labs, providing state-of-the-art learning space for up to 200 new students. The new facility offers visual access to the building's structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, providing real-life STEM application opportunities.



- On the exterior, it was important to not detract from the building's historic presence in the community. Therefore, facilities went to great lengths to ensure that the exterior stone was mined from the same source as the original structure. With full-height glass walls, the old and new blend seamlessly and add a modern touch to the facility.



Photo courtesy of Gilbert Architects Inc.

2020-21 RECOGNITIONS

CONGRATULATIONS!

TOP SCHOOLS IN PA

DHS East, DHS West and STEM were all ranked in the top 70 high schools in PA by US News

NATIONALLY-RANKED

STEM ranked number two in PA and #34 nationally by US News

NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS

Nikhil S. Alex, Srikar R. Bhumireddy, Pranav V. Chavali, Abhinav S. Pillai, William E. Qi, Saniya S. Vaidya - DHS East; Nicholas Cassano, Isabella Hughes - DHS West; Nicholas Graybill, Atishay Jain, Ryen Ling, Elizabeth Lu, Jason H. Ma, Ria M. Medagam, Yumi E. Shinagawa, Cole D. Springer, Prithvi Ulaganathan, Jingxu Wang, Sydney L. Yao, Leo Y. Zhang, Andrew D. Zou - STEM

AP CAPSTONE AWARD

Kathryn Emmert, Adithi Gollakota, Ananya Gollakota, Saanvi Gupta, Maryam Ismail, Rebecca Koblish, Srikar Lanka, Matthew Milkiewicz, Vasishta Tumuluri, Pravalika Vangala - DHS East; Leanne Filidore, Maureen Hammond, Kendall Henry, Jocelyn Kiefel, Anushka Levaku, Adeline Peat, Elizabeth Proietti, Justin Sorrell - DHS West

NAMM FOUNDATION BEST COMMUNITIES FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

DASD Music Department

PAEA OUTSTANDING VISUAL ARTS COMMUNITY

DASD Art Department

ASBO MERITORIOUS BUDGET AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN BUDGET PRESENTATION

DASD Business Office

SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR & SUPPORTS TIER 3 RECOGNITION

Lionville Elementary School

SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR & SUPPORTS CERTIFICATION

Brandywine Wallace Elementary School

PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Jon Ross, Ed.D. - LMS

CITADEL HEART OF LEARNING AWARD

Kathleen Cool - UH

SENIOR STATS - CLASS OF 2021

TOTAL NUMBER OF GRADUATES	1,075
SENIORS CONTINUING EDUCATION	968
4 YEAR	854
1-2 YEAR	114
STUDENTS JOINING THE MILITARY	28
STUDENTS WHO TOOK ONE OR MORE THAN ONE AP/IB COURSE	876

MAINLINE TODAY TOP TEACHER 2020

Brian Hassel - DHS West

NSPRA COMMUNICATIONS AWARD OF MERIT PENSRA COMMUNICATIONS AWARD OF HONOR (2) AND AWARD OF MERIT

Jennifer Shealy - Communications Department

NICKELODEON AND TIME'S TOP 20 KID OF THE YEAR FINALIST

Ronak Suchindra - LMS

PUBLISHED AUTHOR

Karthik Murugan - DHS East, Mara Magarahan, Lauren Scott, Alexander Paul, Sarah Ellis, Sydney Junkins - DHS West

STORYWORKS MAGAZINE "BIGFOOT CONTEST" WINNER

Brennan Bagwan - WB

PA ALL-STATE CHORUS

Jackson McGovern - DHS East, Jolie Lloyd - DHS West, Cameron Bowden - STEM

PA ALL-STATE BAND

Dasen Stuligross - DHS East

PIAA AAA STATE CHAMPION

Alexa Fulton - Gold medals in 50 Yard Freestyle & 100 Yard Freestyle



CITADEL HEART OF LEARNING, TRACI WATSON HEART AWARD

Elijah Andrus - BC



COMMUNITY ART INSTALLATION

Created by artist Rhoda Kahler with students & staff from WB and DHS West

UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION HUNTER'S GREEN BUCKHORN U12 TENNIS CHAMPION

Carter Smallwood - SM

DISTRICT 1 CHAMPION

Declan Rymer - 1600m, Jada Alston - 100m, Aiden Barnhill - Cross Country, Nicholas Gross - Golf Champion - DHS West

ABOUT DASD

Set in the heart of Chester County, Downingtown Area School District is a twenty-first century district with the idealistic warmth and charm of a small town. As a close-knit yet diverse community of over 13,000 students, and as the seventh largest in PA, DASD students are challenged, engaged and inspired through a multitude of academic opportunities, passionate educators and innovative teaching methods. DASD values collaborative learning and critical thinking while remaining focused on student wellness and serving the whole child. Boasting some of the top schools in the state and nation, we are proud of our tradition of excellence.

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