

Strategic Plan  
2008-2013

DEXTER

Our Vision:  
Champion Learning - Develop, Educate, and Inspire!

**Dexter Community Schools**

Rob Glass, Superintendent

7714 Ann Arbor Street

Dexter, MI 48130

(734) 424-4100

[www.dexterschools.org](http://www.dexterschools.org)

## Vision

***Champion Learning: Develop, Educate, and Inspire!***

## Mission

We will encourage and develop each student's individual abilities, skills, and character, to shape tomorrow's world through positive relationships, best practices, and a shared sense of purpose.

## Core Beliefs

### ***We believe in:***

- ◆ Working with passion, pride, and integrity to realize one's personal best
- ◆ Providing quality educational opportunities for all learners at all levels
- ◆ Continually evaluating the effectiveness and relevancy of the K-12 curriculum to better achieve desired student outcomes
- ◆ Maximizing fiscal effectiveness, efficiency, and stability in the operation and the physical resources of the school district
- ◆ Eliminating prejudice and discrimination to promote tolerance and a respectful school environment
- ◆ Enhancing dialogue with the community to increase and strengthen the essential partnership of staff, students, and community.
- ◆ Ensuring a safe and secure learning environment to maximize student achievement

## Focus Areas

### **Student Learning**

Provide a world class education that develops, challenges and inspires all students

### **Positive Human Connections**

Develop a culture of respect and caring for one another that exists within the entire school community

### **Communication**

Maintain and improve on-going, two way communication with all segments of the school district; Maintain and improve on-going, two way communication with all segments of the community at large; Pursue meaningful partnerships at every level; Examine what we are doing and what works well

### **Finance**

Continue to implement effective business operations practices; Improve communication to provide transparent, accurate, useful, information to all stakeholders; Provide better access to more useful tools for program managers and other staff; Provide better access to easily understood general information; Provide long-term financial stability to support education program goals; Manage bond projects effectively

### **Facilities**

Provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment that is aesthetically pleasing and conducive to exemplary learning; Conserve energy usage; Growth building usage accommodation

# Student Learning

## Dexter Community Schools Strategic Plan

Champion Learning: Develop, Educate, and Inspire

◆Curriculum – To meet changing needs and expectations of stakeholders, the curriculum is broad-based, rich, and challenging. The curriculum meets the needs and abilities of students at every level and is aligned and updated based upon current research. The curriculum is clearly articulated, committed to writing, and is accessible to parents, students, teachers, and administrators. The curriculum is consistently implemented across the District in a manner to ensure the development of a common knowledge and skill base among students at specific grade levels. The adopted curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for students to participate in academic and extra-curricular activities. These activities complement the instructional program in developing the skills and talents of students.

◆Instruction – Instructional practice refers to the use of teaching techniques, time and space, school equipment, and specific programs in support of the District’s vision and mission. Specific instruction practices are based on established, research based “best practices.” High expectations for achievement are the standard for both staff and students in every class, every day. Differentiated content and instructional techniques are developmentally appropriate and are designed to create a personalized learning environment for each student. Instructional practices are fully supported and provide high quality, relevant professional development opportunities for all staff.

### Goal 1

*Provide a world class education that develops, challenges and inspires all students*



### Strategies

- 1.1 **Create a culture that defines & develops 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and global competencies**
  - a. Investigate, adapt, share and implement best practice models/units to teach and assess: Creativity, Curiosity, Inventive thinking, Effective communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Decision making, Purposeful risk taking, Digital age learning, Constructivist learning, Inquiry, Reflection
  - b. Develop a variety of resources for teachers to ensure student learning via technology
  - c. Develop programs that connect classroom learning to experiences and applications outside the classroom
  - d. Explore ways to organize the teaching and learning environment so that innovative learning opportunities are enhanced
  - e. Provide teachers with professional development opportunities to enhance innovative learning at all levels

- 1.2 **Articulate the curriculum so that it is understandable to students and stakeholders, thus enabling greater levels of student self-efficacy and parental support**
  - a. Articulate and communicate clear essential learning targets
  - b. Periodically review current and new initiatives after implementation for effectiveness
  - c. Evaluate curriculum expectations against the curriculum and ask if they replace something we are already doing (selective abandonment)

◆ **Assessment** – A system of multiple assessments is routinely administered and used to determine levels of student achievement. Data about the effectiveness of curriculum and instructional practices are used to guide instruction and to ensure continuous student achievement. The system of assessment is supported with training, technology, and other necessary resources.

◆ **Technology** – Technology is a tool for learning and is widely integrated into the District's instructional programs as an essential skill whose successful application enhances and extends instruction and learning. The effective use of technology, for both instructional and administrative purposes, requires ongoing, relevant professional development opportunities at every level and on a consistent basis.

### *Goal 1 (continued)*

*Provide a world class education that develops, challenges and inspires all students*

## Strategies

### **1.3 Increase and enhance technology integration across the district**

- a. Provide all professional staff and students with up to date technology
- b. Provide professional development to assure that all staff are skilled in technology use and integration
- c. Afford all students the opportunity to use technological equipment and materials

### **1.4 Use assessment data efficiently to determine / improve student learning**

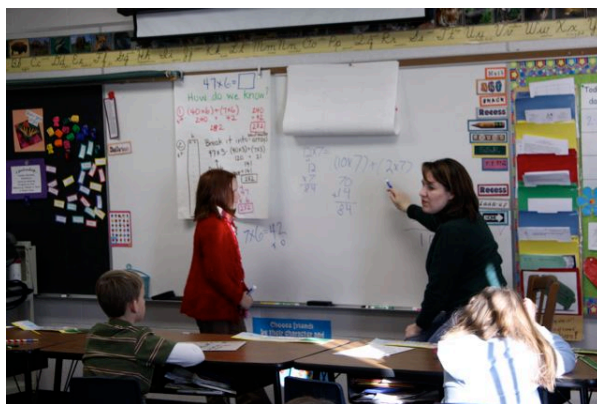
- a. Evaluate current assessments used district wide for relevance
- b. Develop assessments aligned to the curriculum
- c. Provide professional development on how to analyze and interpret assessment data
- d. Utilize data to drive instruction

### **1.5 Personalize learning for all students**

- a. Assess and strengthen differentiated instruction by:
  - i. Studying and exploring differentiation models
  - ii. Providing professional development in differentiated instruction
  - iii. Supporting learning opportunities for developing best practices
  - iv. Offering opportunities for advanced training
  - v. Identify and utilize technologies to enable personalized learning

### **1.6 Provide individualized academic support and intervention for students who are not making expected progress**

- a. Identify students who are not making progress
- b. Determine the cause of the academic learning gap via student achievement data analysis
- c. Develop intervention plans
- d. Evaluate and monitor student improvement in targeted areas



# Positive Human Connections

## Dexter Community Schools Strategic Plan

Champion Learning: Develop, Educate, and Inspire

Schools exist to provide high-quality, learning opportunities for students. A safe and orderly environment is an essential component to support learning and enhance efforts to improve student achievement. Effective schools recognize the need to establish behavioral expectations and routines that reflect district-wide goals for a safe, orderly, and respectful environment that is free from bullying and harassment.

Schools also recognize the need to create an environment where everyone is valued for the contributions they make to developing and sustaining meaningful relationships between teachers, students, administrators, support staff, and parents. These relationships are cultivated by providing on-going professional development opportunities which promote relationship building and keeping all employees informed about important aspects of the District.



### Goal 2

*Enhance the culture of respect and caring for one another that exists within the entire school community*

#### Strategies

- 2.1 Make respect and caring for one another a priority – make it a way of life**
  - a. Define and model respect and caring
  - b. Provide staff development related to understanding personality types (coworkers and students) (e.g. True Colors, Myers Briggs, etc.) investigate what's available
  - c. Create channels of sharing methods of teaching respect (e.g. how to handle bullying, harassment, what is being used in each building, e.g. using "I" messages)
  - d. Validate, positive recognition of all; Respect and value issues that affect morale; Explore instruments used to measure morale
  - e. Provide staff development related to understanding cultural/ethnic diversity
  
- 2.2 Ensure appropriate plans are in place for the entire district to provide and ensure a safe and orderly environment for all emergency situations**
  - a. Provide pertinent training to all staff members
  - b. Provide information on web for staff (Google apps) pertaining to drills, etc.
  - c. Ensure adequate staffing to supervise safety procedures
  - d. Establish a district wide phone system to notify staff and community of emergencies, i.e. school closings
  - e. Ensure all district playgrounds and fields are maintained to meet requirements
  - f. Provide proper equipment and training to ensure building security

- 2.3 Explore ways to collaborate with parents and students to address concerns of different demographic groups within the community**
  - a. Develop and/or expand on diversity forums (parents/students/community) to foster appreciation and address concerns
  - b. Develop a process to problem solve, seek options, and determine solutions to diversity challenges
  - c. Develop a process to communicate with students and parents in all buildings and departments regarding diversity issues
  - d. Use technology to present a global perspective to students and gain a more worldly view of cultures both within and outside of the US

# Communication

## Dexter Community Schools Strategic Plan

Champion Learning: Develop, Educate, and Inspire

Effective school organizations maintain ongoing, two-way communication with all segments of the school and the community at large. It is imperative that employees at every level and the school community at large be well informed. Information relative to the district and its students must be communicated openly, honestly, and in a timely manner which is easily understood. Ongoing partnerships between the school, families, and the business community provide mutual benefit, enhance the learning process, and significantly increase the potential for relevant, hands-on experiences for students. The district will pursue meaningful partnerships at every level.

### Goal 3

*Maintain and improve two-way communication with all segments of the school district and community at large*

#### Strategies

##### 3.1 **Develop communication systems that allow for all district staff and the community to have access to calendar events**

- a. Create a district wide calendar that encompasses all building and department events, both during and after school, and is accessible to all staff, buildings and departments
- b. Revise the current protocol for calendar usage with respect to event planning

##### 3.2 **Continue and develop communication through individual building and department newsletters**

- a. Departments will continue or develop their means of communication - through individual or building newsletters
- b. Encourage all staff to develop a consistent form of communication with interested stakeholders

##### 3.3 **Enhance marketing of Dexter and the school district**

- a. Encourage all employees to promote the district in both professional and community settings
- b. Develop strong working relationships with realtors in the area
- c. Enhance the use of the website to be more informative about the district's programs
- d. Continue building relationships with community organizations
- e. Explore ideas regarding increasing enrollment
- f. Use technology for touring the district and community

##### 3.4 **Explore options for communicating information**

- a. Continue and enhance the use of information boards in common areas of every building
- b. Explore technological means to disseminate emergency information in a consistent and timely manner
- c. Impart information via hotlines
- d. Encourage and enhance a consistent means for staff to make contact about students
- e. Explore ways to develop technology stations at every building for parent use
- f. Explore ways to make the parent email list serve more user friendly
- g. Share information about students who are struggling – what works and what has been tried

##### 3.5 **Develop seamless, barrier-free communication systems that will allow all district staff to access relevant information, pertinent to their building, role, or department**

- a. Determine appropriate communication systems for each department/building (i.e. iPhones, Blackberries, computers, email, walkie-talkies, etc.)
- b. Provide resources and training to create appropriate communication systems for each department/building/employee

##### 3.6 **Pursue meaningful partnerships at every level by involving all facets of the community to voice input and use ideas in a meaningful manner**

- a. Invite and engage the voices of the parents for constructive input- Personal touch
- b. Have a policy of openness, engage and listen to parents and community members in constructive ways
- c. Develop electronic methods for parents and community members to provide input, whether concerns, questions or affirmations – utilizing this voice in a manner to help guide discussions
- d. Predictability of meetings and approach; Town hall meetings, etc. need to be directed, meaningful, and continuous



# Facilities

## Dexter Community Schools Strategic Plan

Champion Learning: Develop, Educate, and Inspire

District facilities that are appropriately designed for and enable the full implementation of the District's curriculum and established instructional practices are essential to the effective and efficient operation of the District. Additionally, appropriately designed and maintained facilities are integral to the efficient operation of the District's extra-curricular and athletic programs. Facilities must be well maintained and safe to ensure maximum benefit for students from the instruction processes of the District.

### **Goal 4**

*Provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment that is aesthetically pleasing and conducive to exemplary learning*



### **Strategies**

#### **4.1 Develop adequate/qualified staffing assessment and schedules**

- a. Use state benchmarks as a guide for staffing opportunities to enhance innovative learning all levels
- b. Create staffing schedule
- c. Create assignments

#### **4.2 Provide advanced training for appropriate staff**

- a. Create periodic training updates for staff
- b. Assure training on any new equipment /systems

#### **4.3 Ensure equipment is maintained, continuously functions, and meets district needs**

- a. Add, replace, and repair maintenance equipment as needed
- b. Produce and maintain a preventative maintenance schedule
- c. Educate staff, students and community to be "Good custodians of our planet"
- d. Ensure all district playgrounds and fields are maintained to meet requirements

#### **4.4 Assure that facilities and grounds are secure**

- a. Eliminate unauthorized access to district buildings and grounds
- b. Maintain adequate safe outside lighting

#### **4.5 Develop a comprehensive plan to assess district growth/reduction of facilities**

- a. Ensure facilities efficiently meet district and community needs
- b. Create a district wide plan to assess facility usage
- c. Align staff in accordance with facility use

#### **4.6 Develop /implement energy conservation plan**

- a. Create a comprehensive plan to reduce energy via equipment upgrades /maintenance
- b. Create a curricular aspect to educate staff /students on energy conservation /environmentally conscience

# Finance

## Dexter Community Schools Strategic Plan

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A stable financial condition is required in order to ensure continuity of programs and stability in the quality of instruction. When necessary, expenditures will be reduced in a manner consistent with the District's vision and mission. Finances must reflect, rather than dictate District policy. Local, regional, and statewide opportunities for revenue enhancement will be pursued which are consistent with the District's vision, mission, and goals.

### *Goal 5*

*Optimize current business practices to provide long-term financial stability to support educational goals, while also providing accurate, useful financial information to all stakeholders*

### **Strategies**

- 5.1 Establish, maintain and review effective and accurate budgeting practices within established accounting guidelines and regulations**
  - a. Use best practices to assure continuous improvement
  - b. Provide ongoing professional development
  - c. Follow district policies and applicable laws in spirit and detail
  - d. Review policies and best practices periodically
  - e. Review significant contracts periodically
  - f. Analyze financial activities to improve costs and efficiencies
  - g. Provide appropriate financial analysis for manager feedback and budget development
  - h. Develop budget following district policies and process
  - i. Receive highest level of "clean" audit annually
- 5.2 Develop and update scenarios projecting expected revenues and expenses; Monitor and control expenses as authorized in approved budgets for all district financial activities**
  - a. Investigate revenue enhancement possibilities periodically
  - b. Evaluate long term (2-5 year) impact of budget decisions with trend analysis
  - c. Review district policies and performance related to: a) Annual revenue versus expense goals b) Designated reserve targets and c) Undesignated reserve target
  - d. Develop and analyze multiple budget scenarios using reasonable ranges of significant parameters
  - e. Investigate potential partnerships which could improve financial performance both money and in kind
  - f. Use fund balance including designated reserves to provide program stability
- 5.3 Add to/improve/develop the DCS website pages to provide access to appropriate forms and procedures.**
  - a. Create an addition to the DCS website which provides operational information (for program managers and other staff)
  - b. Develop and publish FAQ page with broad answers and links to web page for more detailed answers
  - c. Provide pointers to existing forms, procedures
- 5.4 Manage bond projects effectively by following district policies, state laws and good business practices in overseeing bond projects**
  - a. Follow appropriate business operations goals to effectively manage bond projects
  - b. Provide appropriate financial information consistent with communication goals
  - c. Follow district policies and good practices to maximize value in purchase of capital items
  - d. Analyze bond plans to maximize support of district goals and needs