

Report of the **Superintendent of Schools**

Elizabeth M. McCoy

The Dover-Sherborn Public Schools are rooted in academic excellence and committed to sustained success and continuous improvement. By way of a rigorous curriculum, extensive enrichment activities, highly competitive athletic teams and clubs, and a strong fine and performing arts program, students have an array of opportunities to develop their intellectual, physical, and artistic abilities. Evidenced by multiple measures, including standardized test scores, graduation rates, college enrollment, and alumni accounts, students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in postsecondary life. As reported by multiple stakeholders, the Schools are the community's greatest asset and the reason most families choose to live and raise their children in Dover and Sherborn.

The Strategy for District Improvement continues to drive the system's work toward achieving its mission: "to inspire, challenge, and support all students as they discover and pursue their full potential."

Goals and initiatives are outlined in five areas:

- ***Excellence & Innovation in Learning:*** Maintain academic excellence and rigor while adapting practices to prepare graduates for success in a rapidly changing world;
- ***Challenge & Support All Students:*** Enhance programming to ensure all students are able to achieve their full potential within a supportive learning environment;
- ***Professional Learning & Growth:*** Expand opportunities for professional growth and collaboration among educators in support of the District's vision for teaching and learning;
- ***Family & Community Engagement:*** Engage families and community members in the strategic pursuit of a shared vision and mission; and
- ***Safe & Sustainable Spaces:*** Evaluate and update facilities to ensure safe, sufficient, and sustainable spaces amid a changing educational and environmental landscape.

As the District continues to focus on deeper learning, social-emotional wellness, and student belonging, many efforts were made in 2024 to elevate student voice. Research indicates that students who believe they have a voice in school are seven times more likely to achieve at high levels, as they experience increased self-worth, engagement, and purpose. The system believes that children have invaluable insights into who they are as individual learners and how to improve the collective experience for all.

To launch this effort, the District Leadership Team welcomed more than 30 students to their summer retreat. Together, administrators and students began analyzing the results of last year's Challenge Success Survey, which gathered information on such topics as student engagement, homework, stress levels, and sleep. By examining quantitative data and sharing lived experiences, the group identified reasons for celebration as well as areas for improvement.

Additional opportunities to elevate student voice include the formation of a Superintendent Advisory Council, the launch of an “I Wish” campaign, and the opportunity for educators to shadow students for a day. Specific to instruction, educators continue to explore ways to increase student voice in the classroom through nine common instructional practices (“Best Practices”). Combined, these initiatives aim to develop students as active agents of learning and engaged citizens empowered to express their views.

To streamline communication, the District now uses ParentSquare, which directs all school and classroom updates, including newsletters, emails, pictures, and calendar invites, through a single platform. Additionally, parents and caregivers can access volunteer opportunities, schedule teacher conferences, and sign permission slips all in one place. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive as families strive to organize multiple sources of information.

In support of its efforts, the District is eternally grateful to the taxpayers who provide a strong financial foundation for an excellent PreK–12th-grade program. The Schools also continue to benefit from the generous support of community organizations such as the Chickering PTO, Pine Hill CSA, Dover-Sherborn Middle School POSITIVE, Dover-Sherborn High School PTO, Dover-Sherborn Boosters, Friends of the Performing Arts (FoPA), and the Alan Thayer Mudge Memorial Fund, among others. As a result, Dover-Sherborn is an exceptional school district in both the academic and extracurricular arenas, and a continued source of pride for the community and its members.