



## Dunlap gets public input on schools

School officials meet with residents to discuss district's future

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**OF THE JOURNAL STAR**

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DUNLAP — For six months, a 38-member Dunlap school district committee has worked to deliver a draft of the district's mission, vision, values, goals and strategies document.

Tuesday night the district let the rest of the community in on the process.

"We have been determined to seek the input of those in the Dunlap school community," said district Superintendent Jay Marino. "Tonight is the culmination of that process, to hear what everybody else thinks about what we're doing to take a very good district and make it into a great one."

After a short Power Point presentation in the Dunlap Valley Middle School theater, the group of about 75 parents, students, teachers, staff members and others filled up seven tables in the school commons and commenced seven discussions.

At one table the discussion flowed from institutionalizing the concept of students performing community service, to crowded classrooms to ways to improve school spirit.

Participants were asked to rate the strategic plan, from one to five, in the five categories - mission, vision, values, goals and strategies. The district planned to tally up the score sheets and adjust the draft for a final document the School Board would approve, most likely in April.

The mission and vision portions of the strategic plan are simple, precise statements:

"The Dunlap School Community will empower all students to excel in a global society," reads the mission statement.

Dunlap students will continuously improve in a global society by being:

- Innovative, creative, critical learners.
- Adaptive, resourceful, self-motivated thinkers.
- Effective communicators and collaborators.
- Respectful, responsible, and culturally aware citizens.
- Technology capable producers.

The values, goals and strategies parts of the strategic plan all are much longer.

Marino identified the district's six biggest challenges as:

- The growing student population.
- Managing and keeping up with facilities.
- A changing demographic (24 percent of students are non-white).
- Increased academic achievement and staving off complacency.
- Embracing change
- Long-term planning in uncertain times.

"I think this is excellent," Dunlap parent Pete Mangieri said on his way out the door from the 90-minute meeting. "It's a district that is traditionally a leader in academics but is looking at how it can be even better. If this works to come up with a plan that doesn't just meet but exceeds expectations, then the process has been well worth the time and effort."

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Comments (7)

Walt Kurtz

2 days ago

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24 percent of students are non-white)?

This is atrocious! I have a question for the district committee; what are you doing to attract more African American students and faculty to the Dunlap schools? Only true diversity will be achieved when there is at least 50 percent low-income minorities in the student body. If you're truly a progressive-minded person then you must embrace the idea of rich cultural diversity in every Dunlap school!

Barrak

2 days ago

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'non-white' does not automatically mean African American, brainiac. There are mostly people of Indian and Asian decent that make up this 24%. What an extremely elitist and racist comment.

Imagine if you had said: What is District 150 doing to attract more White students and faculty to their district? The growth of the Dunlap school district has been created out of necessity.

gerg

2 days ago

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Atrocious, really Walt? I'm not taking that bait.

Deeply Concerned

2 days ago

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I think that Dunlap is setting the bar for anyone that wants to be in their district. First of all, the expectations in the district are very high and ANY student (African-American[Walt], asian, hispanic, Indian, caucasian, whatever) will be expected to meet that standard. The second point is that in order to attend the schools in that district, families must reside within the boundaries of that district. Dunlap is not like 150 where there is a chronic problem of students attending various schools for a variety of reasons. Unfortunately, the movement within the district is due to behavior issues and not residency issues. Then you have people that hide behind the veil of 'diversity' to justify the movement of their children. When the standards are set, strive to meet them and not criticize them!!! Kudos to Dunlap for raising the bar of achievement for ALL students, now and in the future. I just hope that district 150 will take note and take similar action!

PFM

2 days ago

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Mr. Walt Kurtz, why would Dunlap want to attract welfare recipients to their town? The reason their school is doing quite well is because of the opposite. If they wanted diversity, they'd build a housing project.

JoeX

2 days ago

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Mr. Kurtz, it is not the job of the Dunlap Board to attract students of any particular ethnic type. Their job is to work to provide good educational resources and and improve outcomes for ALL students as much as possible. They do a good job. The last time that I checked there was no fence barring anyone from moving into the Dunlap school district. Many have, to escape the never-ending mismanagement and disintegration of District 150.

Neither should the Board hire faculty and staff by ethnicity. The most qualified people should be hired, regardless of ethnicity. Dunlap district likely does that, as the parents and kids don't care about a teacher's ethnicity - they just want good teachers. I will bet that some former District 150 teachers now teach in the Dunlap schools.

The Dunlap district IS successful because the Board, teachers, and parents are active and involved, students are expected to perform, and time is not wasted upon conforming to arbitrary racial quotas as you propose.

Perhaps District 150 would be more successful if they focused on and adopted their own goals for improvement rather than being so often distracted by 'color' or 'race'.

Rollie

2 days ago

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I am most surprised that there were only a group of about 75 parents, teachers, students, staff members, and others attending this session. That is a very small percentage of those who could have attended. Not what I would have expected from a group that is supposed to be so dedicated to education.

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