

Comments Submitted Via Internet - SWOT Analysis

1. Please comment on the "STRENGTHS" of the Dunlap School District.

#	Response
1	Education a strong priority. Support for low students.
2	For the most part, students who want to do well, and parents that are willing to help them succeed. A safe environment!
3	Terrific parental support. High achieving students.
4	High expectations Focused on student achievement Developing a vision to move forward.
5	Go Dunlap! We are a high achieving district that has great parental involvement. Maybe I'm biased, but I think our staff is pretty great!
6	The involvement of the students, staff, and parents is wonderful! The support is great.
7	Students come to school ready to learn. Teachers come to school prepared and full of energy.
8	I agree with the strengths indicated.
9	Strong administrative support. Always willing to change.
10	Curriculum, staff, parents, administrators
11	Student achievement. High quality teachers. Asked for input on many issues.
12	Parental support
13	I'm glad we are doing well financially and are responsible with our money. I think the climate of the Dunlap district is a huge strength. We are doing great academically, but there is always room for continuous improvement.
14	Great families, great kids, lots of classes, lots of activities, great teachers, flexible schedule
15	High Expectations, pride in accomplishments
16	Academics
17	Students. Economic stability. Growth.
18	Our students, parental support, fiscally sound.
19	The parents are interested and involved in their students' education and the process that guides their education. Dunlap has taken a conservative approach to managing finances. Most of the teachers truly care about the students and their success.
20	Commitment to academics
21	Obviously there's something to be said about the fact that there are more and more people moving into the Dunlap school district area.
22	Dedicated teachers, good administrative support
23	As a parent with children at DHS, DMS, and WW, I have always felt that the teachers are one of Dunlap's greatest strengths. My children have had fabulous teachers throughout the 10 years we have had kids in the Dunlap schools. I hope that the District continues to provide training and workshops to keep the teachers "growing" in their educational knowledge and keep the teachers accountable to the high standards in Dunlap.
24	High achieving students, highly knowledgeable teachers and staff.
25	Wonderful people to work with. I go to four different schools, and enjoy all the staff that I interact with. Also, Dunlap has a strong vision.

26	Finances. Educational opportunities.
27	Parental involvement and coworkers are great! Awesome kids!!!
28	The tax base and overall demographic components of our district have helped develop a good academic focus for most students. The classroom facilities are well maintained.
29	Proud to have my children attend Dunlap High School and agree with strengths listed.
30	The strengths are real ones, but I feel that too much emphasis is placed in Dunlap School district on ISAT and other standardized test scores and preparation for them instead of what each child knows and has learned throughout the year. For instance, my 4th grader can score a 99 percentile and give a perfect "extended response" score on the ISAT but still doesn't know basic grammar and spelling rules.
31	Overall, Dunlap School District offers quality education and its academic performance is quite impressive not just locally but also statewide. For the district to continue to pursue excellence for all school levels, we should raise our standard for students since the majority of the students exceed or meet their grade standards. The ISAT data shows that about 1/4 to 1/3 of the students were below their grade standards in writing, which deserves more action and effort for improvement. DHS now offers 8 AP classes, an improvement from years ago, but there is no AP Biology. The district may consider beefing up the AP classes.
32	Proactive assessment of goals and mission.

2. Please provide any "OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT" in the Dunlap School District.

#	Response
1	Everyone needs to be involved. It takes a school to teach a child- not just the school leader.
2	Reading specialist in the elementary level, more need for counselors in the elementary level. Sharing amongst 4 buildings, with the populations we have, just isn't feasible any longer. The same holds true for the librarians, speech therapists, and ESL teachers.
3	Time and opportunities to collaborate are a must for teachers. Also, consistency across the board in the area of academics needs to be addressed.
4	Building relationships across the district. Embracing the shared leadership concept. Deemphasizing test scores and focus on quality student learning.
5	I agree that we need more time for collaboration as a building and it was interesting to see that trend over the entire district! We need more support staff! It seems crazy that we have one school nurse, one librarian, and one counselor for all four elementary schools. Speech is also almost maxed out! I'd also love to see an intervention specialist at each school. Is that asking for too much? Haha! I can dream right?
6	I agree that more ELL, speech, library staff, and counselors would be helpful. :) I would not like to see us move toward an extended school day or extended year.
7	More support teachers for RTI and gifted program.
8	Technology issues at the middle school are a concern. Sixth graders had no instruction and seventh has only one semester. Rooms are not equipped with computers that work. Teachers need help to administer interventions. One reading aide for all grades is not enough. Struggling students need a body not a computer program. Basically our support staff is not as productive as it could be due to the number of children they service.
9	Computers in all of the classrooms. Standard handwriting curriculum across the district. An aligned science curriculum across the district.
10	More personnel is needed to implement quality programs (such as inclusion for students in the regular classrooms).
11	Space issues. Consistency with decision making. Overall climate.
12	Collaboration time during school day for teams/grade levels. Collaboration time for between grade levels (grade above/below), BBT-lack of wanting to test for resource services, lack of resource teachers/time, lack of reading aides.
13	Facility needs are definitely something we need to look into, as I know we have already started that. The money for more support staff/interventionalists to help address the needs of all students is something we should really start focusing on more. An actual gifted program where there is some kind of curriculum and/or teacher that pulls the kids out would be wonderful. I hear that a lot from parents of gifted children. Differentiated instruction isn't always enough.
14	The student population has definitely grown over the years. I think it would be beneficial for the district to look at how/if support staff (counselors, librarians, nurses, ELL teachers, literacy aides, etc.) has increased to accommodate all of the new students. As an elementary teacher, I would like the support of a counselor, nurse, and librarian within my building instead of them having to travel to all 4 buildings. I feel that it would greatly benefit all students and teachers.
15	WE NEED SMALLER CLASS SIZES AND MORE TIME FOR COMMUNICATION WITH CO WORKERS!!!!

16	Staff turnover too high, facilities are too crowded, not enough athletic facilities, not enough computers available, curriculum not articulated well enough, not enough staff input, poor communication from Board of Education, distrust between staff and the Board, antiquated ideas about educational processes, penny pinching attitude demoralizes personnel.
17	Athletics. More money needs to be put towards athletics and athletic facilities.
18	Growth in academics outside of science and math. Athletics are way behind local schools.
19	The opportunities for improvement are endless if administrators are honest about the "holes" in our educational system. RTI is not functioning as it should be at all seven schools. There should be a district model that is adopted and followed at all schools. We frequently have students transfer between schools and the process should not look different at another school. Staff is not adequately trained in the RTI process. There has been plenty of discussion about RTI theory, but what it looks like and how it functions in the classroom is an area that is lacking. There is not enough support staff to address all areas being benchmarked (math). The ratio of students receiving interventions/aide is way out of line. It takes far too long to identify students with learning disabilities. Many people are under the belief that this is because Dunlap does not want too many special ed students or it will affect their ISAT scores. I certainly hope this is not the case. The older buildings need some attention and updating. Our technology needs to keep up with the times and it needs to be brought into the classrooms in a more hands-on manner. There are some great studies out there of schools that provide students with laptops and they have done some amazing things in terms of connecting with other students around the world.
20	Second year of physics would better prepare science and engineering students for college.
21	Providing more personnel to accomodate the rapid growth Dunlap school district is experiencing is a MUST!
22	Grades accessible to parents.
23	As the District grows, I feel that you are going to have to keep an eye on the needs of children that don't come in with the same educational base that Dunlap is used to. With the district growing quickly, I think you will start to see children that need some remediation in different subjects. These children may not have had the same life experiences and educational opportunities that the children currently in Dunlap have had. I hope that this can be addressed so it doesn't bring down the high standards that Dunlap is offering at this stage.
24	Athletic facilities really need updating and we need more space for teams. ie. new gyms, weight rooms, offices, etc.
25	Need more special education staff as the numbers of special education students continue to grow.
26	Special education, speech and OT.
	After school tutoring.
	Heavy reliance on volunteers.
27	Hire staff according to needs and numbers. For example, the speech pathology department is understaffed according to workload and caseload. REPORTED caseload numbers are severely low compared to ACTUAL numbers. It would be helpful for the board to consider the American Speech Hearing Association (ASHA) recommendations for workload/caseload (40 students per speech pathologist compared to 60).
28	To teach our children how to analyze problems/opportunities and reach decisions not how to memorize text book answers or teacher's preferences. Can we fund the ability to have all of our textbooks online? It seems odd that our children still have to drag textbooks around. Too much emphasis placed on teaching the ISAT test to elementary and middle school students. Every year it seems that once these tests have been administered, the school year is virtually over from an instruction standpoint. incorporate a full 360 degree review of all teachers that would include some input from parents and students as part of the annual review process. The H.S. athletic infrastructure needs updated.
29	Dunlap offers "Homework Hotline" in middle school, then nothing in high school. Once our students get to college, however, they are given an outlined syllabus that shows the entire semester on one page, assignments dates, etc... this allows for reading ahead of lectures for better understanding of material (for those more motivated students), working ahead on larger projects, learning to set one's own individual study needs and time management and extra-curricular activities.

30	<p>Return grammar instruction to the classroom at the elementary level. The reading curriculum introduced in the elementary schools last year greatly places emphasis on inferring what is read and now basic grammar and spelling rules have been devalued. I liked it when my older child had weekly language arts lessons on punctuation, etc.</p> <p>Do annual evaluations from the parent perspective. If you want more parental involvement, then ask us for our feedback regularly on what's working and what is not. I also think part of the teacher's annual performance evaluation should be based upon parent evaluation. In the 7 years I have had children in the Dunlap School District, my children have had some teachers that are excellent and need to be recognized as such. Then, there are others who don't seem to care or engage the student or parents, and frankly, shouldn't be teaching in the district. Parents know this and see it throughout the year in many ways that an administrator may not. Getting parent feedback on teachers would truly allow for the 360 degree evaluation set up that many businesses and corporations have already developed.</p>
31	<p>The data shows that the numbers of special education students and the gifted students are roughly of the same percentage. The needs of the special education students are met on a daily basis, but the needs of the gifted students haven't been seriously addressed so far. The present "gifted program" is just a formality with little substance. The gifted kids need to be intellectually challenged to develop their potential, which requires a constant (daily or, at least, weekly) program/curriculum matching to their learning ability. The current gifted program is only for 2nd to 6th graders. Is this decided by evidence from education research or is it limited by the district's resources? I know some gifted students become lazy because they can easily get good grades. My 6th grader feels totally bored at middle school math because so far nothing taught in class is new to my child. Many people may not consider putting the gifted program on the high priority list due to other "more urgent" needs under the present economic condition. Recent research shows that gifted students are actually losers of the "No Child Left Behind" policy and the economic recession. However, insightful educators understand the importance of the issue and will not ignore it. A few grade school teachers are doing their best to help the advanced learners but a district-wide enrichment program is still necessary to ensure that no qualified student is left out.</p>
32	<p>-Foreign language: this should be offered for EVERYONE in middle school, if not before. -Smaller classes (under 20) -Higher expectations for minimum achievement levels (ie: % who excel above standards should be higher than the % of those who meet standards...and should be higher than the 40%-56% seen in the data). -More sport options -Ability for a student who is participating in a sport to "opt out" of PE...that period would be more valuable as an extra academic period.</p>
33	<p>Divided math groups. Dividing children into leveled math groups starting in the 2nd grade. That way all students get ahead and no one gets left behind. Don't stagnate children to just required concepts. Do we really want a stagnated bunch of kids who only speak English running our world? Didn't think so. Ideally it's nice to have 5 fluid groups, however in our smaller elementary schools I believe there are only 3 sections of each class so there would only be 3 math levels.</p>
34	<p>It is imperative that we implement a foreign language in grade school. Foreign language should be mandatory for all only English speaking kids. A flat world will not just speak English. I recommend Spanish because it is sustainable. Also, my son has moved quite easily into French and has said he's surprised of how much French he already knows because of learning Spanish early. I'm sure it would have been the same if he had learned French and moved to Spanish. I understand though that Cantonese (I think) / Mandarin is the #1 spoken language. We really owe this to our children. To give them this gift at an early age and not wait until (just a few students) middle school when they have to study for it is a beautiful gift. Our (yours and mine) future depends on it. I have no idea what math scores have to do with Spanish in middle school. If anything it should be offered to those who score well in English Literature. But again it should be mandatory for all students.</p>
35	<p>Academic Extensions/Enrichment should be offered to those children in elementary school who have already mastered required concepts. These children are pulled out of that specific subject while in school. This is teacher recommended, can be organized by an educator and in some cases Parent volunteers can run/assist. This academic extension is a wonderful concept where gifted and talented programs aren't offered like in our school. I see some movement in regards to this in the middle school.</p>

36	After School Enrichment classes (elementary) for ALL students..fee based of course.
37	DMS has their Principal's philosophy on their web site. What about DVMS? I hope his is the same.
38	Sports philosophy. We need one. One specific of High School and another specific for Middle school. They are different. Middle school is developmental, allowing kids to gain confidence, help them figure out who they are. It's not to humiliate or demean. It's to give all of them a chance to develop. some coaches to a wonderful job in regards to this.(maybe we need to go back to our psychology books). We need to look at our purpose as educators and set egos aside. I played college sports, I know all about competition.
39	Need more hands on science and technology in the Elementary and Middle Schools. The elementary schools are in a desperate and urgent need for computers. I don't think 4-5 in each class room is unrealistic at all.
40	Family access for on line grading. As we have a quite incredible computer savvy Sup. It would be nice for the dist to be in the up and up with our web grade book. Ideally you have ONE family access account, ONE login and ONE Password and you are able to access every child in every different building. That is nice. Or how about every Friday a web-link is automatically sent to your email address and you can access it right there! EASY!!
41	ONE Family Lunch Account which means one check for all children no matter where they are housed. Easy and simple!
42	How about a reading incentive program in the elementary schools...they don't have one.
43	It would be so incredibly awesome to have an ECFE (Early Child and Family Education) program here. http://www.ecfe.info/what_is_ecfe.html Especially in reading, you would be SHOCKED at the unbelievable difference it makes in the k-5th grades. But, educators must be prepared because these kids can really get ahead.
44	Fun and Painless Fundraising.

3. Please share any other "IMPACTS" to the Dunlap Schools that should be considered in the strategic planning process (Categories include: Educational Impacts, Technological Impacts, Demographic Impacts, Social Impacts, Economic Impacts and Political Impacts)

#	Response
1	Competitive impact- negative in nature.
2	I believe there is a strong need to address the minorities in the population, who are not necessarily being served well.
3	?
4	Housing market. Continued academic success.
5	Technology-we are far behind. We need newer computers in each classroom as well as training for new technologies.
6	I don't think we should do year around schools, nor should we do extended year/day (unless that is just for certain kids, such as struggling students who want more help). In regards to the social impacts, I think there should be some kind of character development "class" the kids go to a couple times a year.
7	Would love to see more social diversity within the schools. I realize this isn't really up to the school board but our kids are sheltered. Also the athletic programs and facilities are way behind. Let's face it athletics are a key component of schools, we excel in a lot of areas why aren't we committed to athletics?
8	Demographics of student body is changing slowly but surely which will likely have an educational and social impact.
9	I have to wonder if the current decline in real estate values will cause many of our families to protest their real estate taxes based on lower comparable sales in their neighborhoods. If people are successful at protesting their property taxes, this could produce a domino effect in the district's finances. Due to the current economic conditions, we cannot ignore the fact that some families within our district who currently attend private schools may have no option but to return to public schools. Do we know how many students this involves? As our population becomes more diverse, it is imperative that we maintain our "small town" feeling in our schools while maintaining the same quality of education. I don't think it's a good idea to adopt an approach that is so "politically correct" that we lose our personal touch with students and families.
10	Technology is not as important in the education process as it is in the design and production processes. Our students need to better understand the theory and then the application. Socially, we are not a community...we are made up of a more "sleeper" community concept. I believe this contributes to some of our "school spirit" issues. Lack of emphasis on excellence in extra-curricular activities also impacts school spirit. Too much parental influence and not enough work ethic on the field of play.
11	As the district grows, I think you are going to see children with many different needs entering Dunlap. I think the key is to be ready for those challenges before they arise.
12	I work at Bradley University where faculty and students use SAKAI http://sakaiproject.org/ for all class sites, grades, teacher-student communications. Also, to start community projects at an earlier age, then lead in to 7th/8th graders tutoring elementary students and Jr/Sr with Fr/Sph as an extracurricular group to earn service towards Honor Society. Also, assign additional assignments from free websites: www.hippocampus.org/ or http://www.webenglishteacher.com/ to give better understanding of something taught in class. (i.e. Sophomores just read The Minister's Black Veil, some students who struggle with comprehension would get so much more by reading the following page: http://www.k-state.edu/english/baker/english251/Symbol_MBV.htm afterwards. Start this at a young age and they learn what to look for. This is not cheating it is "Standing on the shoulders of giants to see further" and grasp a better meaning then just finishing and thinking, "Wow, that was a wierd story."

13	Demographic impact--more families moving into the district have both parents working. I myself am a full time working mom. 7 years ago when my oldest started school, I was a rarity. Dunlap still tends to "cater" to the stay at home mom and not households where both parents work. This is evident in the fact that PTO meetings and other school events are held during the day instead of after work when more parents can be there. If Dunlap is committed to engaging parents in the learning process more, then they need to be flexible to have alternative hours for PTO, registration, etc.
14	Internet learning for advanced classes in high school.
15	Academic Extensions/Enrichment should be offered to those children in elementary school who have already mastered required concepts. These children are pulled out of that specific subject while in school. This is teacher recommended, can be organized by an educator and in some cases parent volunteers can run/assist. This academic extension is a wonderful concept where gifted and talented programs aren't offered like in our school. I see some movement in regards to this in the middle school.

4. Other input I'd like the strategic planning team to consider is...

#	Response
1	Why are we seeing more and more students that need interventions? Has our curriculum played a part in this?
2	Very pleased with the unit office staff, hopefully having a trickle down effect on the schools within the district.
3	One of the possible strategy considerations was to have parents or community members help with interventions. I think that could be a good idea, as long as they are well trained in the intervention they are doing. Furthermore, the idea of not collecting grades is an interesting topic. In some ways, I think it would eliminate many problems. I just don't know what the alternative would be and how it would work.
4	I was very pleased to see that teachers needing/wanting collaboration time was ranked as a top priority at all of the district buildings. I feel being given time to work together will help our district address some of the other opportunities we would like to work on.
5	If kids are our first priority, then we need to do what is best.
6	Why keep putting bandages on the high school. Think ahead.
7	Sudden, forced change can dampen the spirits of staff and students if they are put under so much pressure. How much change is too much, considering the district is already excelling?
8	There is one thing that has been bothering me about the district. There are times when the parents have too much power. Twice in the last two years parents have forced coaches to resign their position. The parents have not followed the proper chain of command and allowed the coaches to rectify the problem. Within our grade schools, parents' clubs have the run of the place. There are fundraisers on top of fundraisers and some of them are very disruptive to the education process. Since our secretaries are so overworked, we have copy moms coming in to help out. At times it is very difficult to have a private conversation about a student because there is always a parent around--even in the teachers' lounge. Without a doubt, parents are one of our best assets and resources, but I live in a neighborhood where people talk and believe me when I tell you that confidentiality is an issue. There is a time and a place for volunteers, but there needs to be limits.
9	The data provided for the number of students receiving speech services in the district is not accurate.
10	Keeping high standards of education should be the number one concern of this planning team, but also to keep the feeling of "community" in Dunlap.
11	Better ways to intervene for the students that come from low socio-economic backgrounds.
12	In future building of schools and updating current schools, please consider space for support staff. One can work in the closet only for so long!
13	How we build our culture of academic success into a culture of academic excellence that is measured in some way other than ISAT or composite ACT scores. Our school district needs to differentiate itself from other school districts.
14	To promote further community spirit, diversity, empathy for others, and a hands-on approach to making a difference in the lives of others, start at a young-age with events like special-olympic volunteering and maybe even adopt this idea in our community: http://www.spartansparkles.com/ . It is said that the students go into it feeling like they will be teaching others, but they learn much more from the special needs children. Also, these students and other IEP kids who struggle to fit in to any niche at school end up blossoming in the areas of self-worth, confidence, grades rising, as it is actually uniting the cliques into a common community.
15	Please take a global perspective in your planning.
16	College preparation: where would you like to see your college-bound students applying? Is ICC the "acceptable minimum" college choice, or is Uof I? Would Harvard or MIT be the ultimate goal? It would be nice to see the district attempt to create an environment in which college preparation was centered around the highest college admission standards in the country in order to allow some students to be competitive.

4. Other input I'd like the strategic planning team to consider is...

#	Response
1	Why are we seeing more and more students that need interventions? Has our curriculum played a part in this?
2	Very pleased with the unit office staff, hopefully having a trickle down effect on the schools within the district.
3	One of the possible strategy considerations was to have parents or community members help with interventions. I think that could be a good idea, as long as they are well trained in the intervention they are doing. Furthermore, the idea of not collecting grades is an interesting topic. In some ways, I think it would eliminate many problems. I just don't know what the alternative would be and how it would work.
4	I was very pleased to see that teachers needing/wanting collaboration time was ranked as a top priority at all of the district buildings. I feel being given time to work together will help our district address some of the other opportunities we would like to work on.
5	If kids are our first priority, then we need to do what is best.
6	Why keep putting bandages on the high school. Think ahead.
7	Sudden, forced change can dampen the spirits of staff and students if they are put under so much pressure. How much change is too much, considering the district is already excelling?
8	There is one thing that has been bothering me about the district. There are times when the parents have too much power. Twice in the last two years parents have forced coaches to resign their position. The parents have not followed the proper chain of command and allowed the coaches to rectify the problem. Within our grade schools, parents' clubs have the run of the place. There are fundraisers on top of fundraisers and some of them are very disruptive to the education process. Since our secretaries are so overworked, we have copy moms coming in to help out. At times it is very difficult to have a private conversation about a student because there is always a parent around--even in the teachers' lounge. Without a doubt, parents are one of our best assets and resources, but I live in a neighborhood where people talk and believe me when I tell you that confidentiality is an issue. There is a time and a place for volunteers, but there needs to be limits.
9	The data provided for the number of students receiving speech services in the district is not accurate.
10	Keeping high standards of education should be the number one concern of this planning team, but also to keep the feeling of "community" in Dunlap.
11	Better ways to intervene for the students that come from low socio-economic backgrounds.
12	In future building of schools and updating current schools, please consider space for support staff. One can work in the closet only for so long!
13	How we build our culture of academic success into a culture of academic excellence that is measured in some way other than ISAT or composite ACT scores. Our school district needs to differentiate itself from other school districts.
14	To promote further community spirit, diversity, empathy for others, and a hands-on approach to making a difference in the lives of others, start at a young-age with events like special-olympic volunteering and maybe even adopt this idea in our community: http://www.spartansparkles.com/ . It is said that the students go into it feeling like they will be teaching others, but they learn much more from the special needs children. Also, these students and other IEP kids who struggle to fit in to any niche at school end up blossoming in the areas of self-worth, confidence, grades rising, as it is actually uniting the cliques into a common community.
15	Please take a global perspective in your planning.
16	College preparation: where would you like to see your college-bound students applying? Is ICC the "acceptable minimum" college choice, or is Uof I? Would Harvard or MIT be the ultimate goal? It would be nice to see the district attempt to create an environment in which college preparation was centered around the highest college admission standards in the country in order to allow some students to be competitive.