



Cover Art —

The artwork on the cover is a wordle that represents the 1,052 comments from the more than 3,000 participants on the **What We Value Survey**. The larger the word, the more times it was expressed in the open comments from participants.

Friends:

Denton ISD strives each year to improve instruction and services to our families and the communities we serve. As our state leaders and local trustees work to identify a comprehensive accountability system, the Denton ISD asked its residents what they find to be important in judging the quality of a school district. More specifically, our district asked – “what do you value?”

Through a third party administrator, K-12 Insight, we distributed more than 30,000 invitations for members of our community to help in the process. All responses were kept confidential and the data was tabulated by the outside entity to maintain its integrity. The rate of return was greater than ten percent, demonstrating that our community has a keen sense of awareness and involvement in our student’s education.

We identified four core areas in which we wish to track progress: **Teaching & Learning, Opportunities for Students, Culture & Climate and Growth & Management**. Based on the feedback from our community, we developed a set of goals and parameters for measurement. Using data as a baseline, and in some cases creating a standard with a set of measurements where they did not previously exist, we reaffirm our commitment of staying accountable to the community we serve.

Through this self-examination and measurement, we hope to create a swell of powerful momentum of continual improvement. We may come from a multitude of backgrounds and experiences, we can all come together in support of our community’s most valuable resource – the education of our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jamie Wilson
Superintendent of Schools



In 2011, the Denton ISD Board of School Trustees set a goal to advocate and practice true accountability based on measurement of individual student progress over time, regardless of external mandates. As local advocates for public education, we believe accountability is born out of the partnership between our school trustees, staff and community.

By the spring of 2015, the Denton Independent School District continued a public conversation and began the development of a community- based report – **What We Value**. Accountability ratings for schools in Texas have existed for more than a decade – schools have been labeled under several systems with an ever changing standard. Currently, the Texas Education Agency accredits public schools in our state, The Accreditation Status, Standards and Sanctions section of the Texas Administrative Code outlines how accreditation statuses are determined and assigned to schools.

While our district acknowledges and welcomes the opportunity to be compared to ensure our students keep pace with state and national standards, our mission to empower life-long learners to be engaged citizens who positively impact their local and global community speaks to much more than an assessment.

Our community wishes for our student's success to be measured by more than one score, on one day. Therefore, the perception of our schools and our district's success should be judged by more than an accountability rating based on the same. In fact, business leaders and parents have raised concern that this emphasis on standardized tests does not ensure whether a Denton ISD graduate is college or career ready.

This report, **What We Value**, is a multifaceted document that seeks to give a clearer view of achievement, and it targets our districts strengths and areas than need improvement for our students.



Community Voice

What We Value . . .

■ *“Denton ISD has many wonderful attributes, is a solid district with outstanding leaders.”*

■ *“Please survey the professors at our local universities and community colleges to get a realistic understanding of the expectations our students will face when they reach college.”*

■ *“We appreciate that Denton ISD has the IB program and hope that it continues to be supported and even expanded. We're glad that DISD promotes well-rounded learning and teaching rather than just test prep.”*



■ *“I moved my family to this community because I wanted my children to get a quality education and so far it has exceeded my expectations. I strongly feel that the district needs to do all it can to engage and retain quality staff.”*

■ *“All schools have equal opportunity to resources. What one school has other schools should have as well. One school is not above the others.”*

■ *“It is VERY important that the teachers feel like they are being lead by people who understand what they do. In every job under the sun the employees will complain: “The higher-ups are just making decisions, getting paid, and making our lives harder.” This is true of Denton ISD employees as well. It is VERY important that those who are responsible for making decisions that affect teachers, have been teachers. Decisions MUST be tested by those who have experiential wisdom.”*

■ *“Keep the lines of communication open between school staff and parents. Making children feel safe and comfortable with the staff.*

■ *“Putting technology into the hands of students must be paramount.”*

■ *“Accountability held from school to school starting with the custodial staff to students to administration. Denton needs consistency in all schools.”*

■ *“The district should provide teachers with technology needed to support students in all areas. Some of the title I schools lack of much needed technology. Also, the district should review the cafeteria menus and make those more appealing to the students without sacrificing the nutrition.”*

■ *“ I like Denton ISD because the students have never been just a number or a test score. Denton ISD cares about the whole child. It's why I teach here and why my children attend here also.”*

■ *“It is very important to integrate new parents/ students into the school system in a welcoming way.”*

■ *“The district should strive to have a more diversified staff throughout the district. Students and parents should be exposed and have a mirrored reflection of themselves and see it on their campuses, administration, and school board, in every professional setting.”*

About Us

What We Value . . .

27,134
students

4,002
Employees

- 22 Elementary Schools (K-5)
- 7 Middle Schools (6-8)
- 3 High Schools (9-12)
- 2 Early Childhood Centers
- 1 Advanced Technology Complex
- 1 Accelerated High School of Choice

38

- Argyle
- Bartonville
- Copper Canyon
- Corinth
- Cross Oak Ranch
- Cross Roads
- Denton
- Double Oak
- Lantana
- Little Elm
- Oak Point
- Paloma Creek
- Pecan Creek
- Providence
- Robson Ranch
- Savannah
- Shady Shores

Our Vision:

In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- cultivate a network of professional learning communities addressing the educational needs of every child in our district
- develop and maintain a culture where learning remains our first priority
- remain committed to providing equitable and outstanding opportunities for every student on every campus
- establish goals for individual campuses that incorporate both measurable and intangible factors
- develop a budget focused on student and professional learning
- effectively communicate achievements and recognitions to the Denton ISD community
- prepare our students to be successful in a global society while instilling an appreciation for community service

Ethnic Distribution

- White: 51%
- Hispanic: 31%
- African American: 12%
- Asian: 3%
- Two or more races: 2%
- American Indian: >1%
- Pacific Islander: >1%



Top 5

1. Spanish
2. Arabic
3. Korean
4. Mandarin
5. Vietnamese

There are **52** Languages Spoken Other than English in Denton ISD

AFRIKAANS (TAAL)	HINDI	RUSSIAN
AKAN (FANTE, ASANTE)	IBO/IGBO	SAMOAN
ALBANIAN	ICELANDIC	SHONA
GHEG ALBANIAN	INDONESIAN	SOMALI
ARABIC	JAVANESE	SPANISH
BURMESE	KOREAN	TAMIL
ENGLISH	MANDARIN	TELUGU
FARSI	NEPALI	THAI
FRENCH	OTHER LANGUAGES	TURKISH
GERMAN	PANJABI	URDU
GUJARATI	PILIPINO	VIETNAMESE
HEBREW	POLISH	YORUBA
	PORTUGUESE	
	ROMANIAN	

17
Communities Served

Student Participation

- Fine Arts (secondary only) **84%**
- Pre-AP/AP Coursework (secondary only) **53%**
- Athletics (secondary only) **35%**
- Career & Technical Education: **24%**
- Bilingual/ESL Education: **15%**
- Special Education: **10%**
- Gifted & Talented Education: **9%**

Empowering lifelong learners to be engaged citizens who positively impact their local and global community.



About Us

What We Value . . .

33%

On average 9,100 students or approximately 33 percent of our student population ride to school on a Denton ISD school bus.

80

Regular education bus routes

2.9

million miles each school year plus an additional 3,600 field trips.

54

Bus routes for students with special needs

23

Temporary or Hazardous bus routes



88%

of the 134 routes are locally funded

92%

of hazardous routes are funded by local dollars

3,177,732

Meals Served

Breakfasts – 734,321

Lunches – 2,272,020

Snacks – 130,144

Summer Lunches – 41,247

42.7%

Students who receive Free and/or Reduced Lunch



2.5 Million

number of used cartons (milk, juice) that can be recycled by Denton ISD

Tracking Core Areas:

Our four core areas in which we wish to track progress: Teaching & Learning, Opportunities for Students, Culture & Climate and Growth & Management. Based on the feedback from our community, we developed a set of goals and parameters for measurement.

Using data as a baseline, and in some cases creating a standard with a set of measurements where they did not previously exist, we reaffirm our commitment of staying accountable to the community we serve.

Schools that receive Title I Funding

12

- Borman Elementary
- Cross Oaks Elementary
- Evers Park Elementary
- Ginnings Elementary
- Hodge Elementary
- Lee Elementary
- Newton Rayzor Elementary
- Pecan Creek Elementary
- Rivera Elementary
- Stephens Elementary
- W.S. Ryan Elementary
- Wilson Elementary

32.7%

Students who receive services from the English Language Learner Program

Teaching & Learning

What We Value . . .

100%

Highly Qualified Teachers

Ethnic Distribution Staff

White.....	77%	Indian/PI.....	2%
Hispanic.....	12%	Asian.....	1%
Black.....	7%	Other.....	1%

89.2%

Teacher Retention Rate

Our Goals:

In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- cultivate a consistent, strong, district-wide balanced curriculum based on ongoing needs assessments that supports all students
- establish high expectations with a curriculum that fosters inquiry and critical thinking
- develop academic skills and interpersonal relationships necessary for student success in college, the workplace and for life
- expect full curriculum implementation on each campus by instructional leaders
- establish quality staff development programs that promote professional learning communities
- strive to deliver all academic programs through teachers possessing advanced degrees and demonstrable competence in their areas of professional responsibility
- stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, technology and leadership
- advocate and practice true accountability based on measurement of individual student progress over time, regardless of external mandates
- actively pursue, foster and support an advanced digital learning environment

Administrators

127



Masters **106**

10 Doctorate

Admin are less than 1%

What our community shared with us...

- Retaining high quality teachers
- Maintaining high learning standards for all students
- Investing in school leaders who consistently make decisions that are in the best interest of students
- Preparing students to succeed in a career



Average Years of Experience of Teachers



10



13.7 Teacher/student ratio

Student/ Administrator ratio

Elem	=	350
MS	=	300
HS	=	350

Teachers with a Masters or Doctoral Degree

29%



Teaching & Learning

What We Value . . .

Our community shared with us the traits a Denton ISD graduate should possess include...

- Persisting in the face of obstacles and challenges
- Solving complex, real-world problems
- Organizing and using time effectively
- Adapting to change
- Interacting comfortably with people different from themselves



Our Mission:

Our mission to empower lifelong learners to ultimately grow and become engaged citizens is at the core of all teaching and learning in our school district. Each year our graduates are accepted by top tier colleges/universities or choose to join the work force.

Based on the beliefs shared by our community, we attribute our student's success to a strong teaching staff and our community's support of a strong public education system. We work to recruit and retaining high quality teachers.

104 AP Scholars

9 AP Scholars with Honors

4 AP Scholars with Distinction

20 International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Graduates

3 National Spanish Exam Medalists

4 National German Exam Medalists

1 National Merit Semifinalists

15 National Merit Commended Scholars

4 National Hispanic Scholars

2 National Achievement Scholars



10 UIL State Academic Qualifiers

1 UIL State Qualifying Academic Team

1 TASSP All-State Academic Team member

4 Gates Millennium Scholars

4 Texas State German Top Ten finishers



95%

Graduation Rate

SAT/ACT Scores

2014 SAT		2014 ACT	
National.....	1497	National.....	21
State	1442	State	20.9
District....	1476	District.....	20.9

total scholarship money awarded to graduating seniors

\$19.6 million

32.3%

of secondary students complete an advanced or dual enrollment course

869

graduates with professional or industry-standard licenses or certifications in a variety of technical fields

92%

percentage of the Class of 2015 from Denton ISD will be attending a two or four-year college or university

Opportunities for Students

What We Value . . .

What our community shared with us.....

- Ensuring all students who want to, can participate in the performing arts
- Ensuring students receive citizenship/civic education
- Opportunities to volunteer and perform community service
- Opportunities for student to improve their health and wellness
- Exceptional performing arts programs

10

Consecutive Years Denton ISD named to **Best Communities for Music Education in America** list

1,510

High School Students in a Fine Arts Class maintaining a 3.5 GPA or higher

96.8%

Participation Rate of Students in One or More Fine Arts Classes



Our Goals:

In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- cultivate a network of professional learning communities addressing the educational needs of every child in our district
- develop and maintain a culture where learning remains our first priority
- remain committed to providing equitable and outstanding opportunities for every student on every campus
- establish goals for individual campuses that incorporate both measurable and intangible factors
- develop a budget focused on student and professional learning
- effectively communicate achievements and recognitions to the Denton ISD community
- prepare our students to be successful in a global society while instilling an appreciation for community service

4,654

Students Participating in Athletics (7-12th grades)

44.5%

Girls Participating in Athletics (7-12th grades)



Varsity Scholar Athletes
(students maintaining a 3.0 GPA or higher) **485**

Climate & Culture

What We Value . . .

What our community shared with us.....



About our schools

- Our schools communicate well
- Parents are provided adequate information about their child's academic progress
- Parents can discuss a concern about their child or school with a staff member
- Parents are informed about school rules and expectations for student behavior
- The district builds strong relationships between schools and parents

About our employees

- Staff members and students treat one another with respect
- Students treat other students with respect
- Staff members are available to help students with academic problems
- Students are treated fairly regardless of age, race, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation and disability

“Our family has been satisfied with teaching and learning, opportunities for students, and growth/management of the Denton Independent School District. There are areas of improvement with regards to culture/climate.”

Our Goals:

In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- *celebrate and respect the diversity in our Denton ISD Community*
- *encourage and nourish a safe learning and compassionate working environment which ensures open and transparent communication and is supportive, cooperative, and ethical*
- *establish a high expectation level for success for all students, staff, parents, and community*
- *instill in students a love of life-long learning*
- *motivate and prepare students to embrace their full responsibilities and obligations as active citizens of their community, nation, and world*
- *foster a positive and welcoming environment that encourages parent and community partnerships to achieve success for all our students*
- *work continuously with the community in planning and facility development*
- *utilize citizens' advisory committees to focus on short and long-term tasks*
- *provide support services and promote health, wellness and safety for students and families*
- *establish and promote programs to develop and enhance parenting skills and participation in the schools*
- *promote child advocacy across the state and nation*



Growth & Management

What We Value . . .

What our community shared with us....

- The district ensures that all students feel safe at school
- The district is responsible with resources, such as technology, textbooks and other learning materials
- The district ensures that all school buildings are clean
- The district is financially responsible
- The district manages a growing student population by adding appropriate facilities

\$221,177,917

**General Operating Fund
for 2015-2016**

**Total fund balance
(assigned and unassigned)**

\$76,659,863

2.8%

average projected
growth rate of
student enrollment
over the next
10 years



69%

the average
rate of voter
approval
over the past six
bond elections



\$1.54

Tax Rate
(M&O and I&S)
For the past five
years only varied
by one cent



\$627 Million
**New Construction or
Renovations since 2004**

12 years

the district has been honored for
“Superior Achievement” on the Financial
Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST)

\$4.9
million

the expected amount
of state
funding the district
will lose this year

savings since 2005 to
taxpayers due to
bond refinancing
(over the life of
the bonds)

\$41.9
million

AAA

Bond Rating for Texas
General Obligation
Funds with an
underlying rating of
AA rating from
Standard & Poors
and Fitch.

Our Goals:

In pursuit of excellence, the district will:

- review and adjust policies and procedures as appropriate to address the challenges of rapid growth and changing demographic characteristics while maintaining and enhancing our strong sense of community
- create and continuously modify strategies to mitigate increasing stresses on our children, our schools and our community
- be environmentally responsible and aggressively pursue energy efficiency and conservation principles in building design transportation alternatives, and operating procedures
- work continuously with our community to adjust and enhance district goals as appropriate
- demonstrate effective and efficient management of district resources
- provide leadership and/or oversight to ensure District meets all fiscal, legal and regulatory requirements

Where do we go from here?

What We Value . . .



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT