



STATE OF THE DISTRICTS 2026

Dwight Public Schools (DCS #232 & DTHS #230)

Dear Dwight Families & Community,

Welcome to the third edition of our annual **State of the Districts**. We are thrilled to share the remarkable progress, academic growth, and athletic and fine arts triumphs achieved across Dwight Public Schools over the past year. Both districts are in solid financial shape, our facilities continue to evolve, and our Redbirds and Trojans are consistently setting high standards across the state.

Here is your comprehensive breakdown of our **2025–2026 school year** highlights and a look into what's ahead!



DWIGHT COMMON SCHOOL #232 (Grades PreK–8)

Total Enrollment: 518 Students | **ISBE Designation:** ★ Commendable (*Zero underperforming student subgroups!*)



The Data Drop

- **95% Average Daily Attendance (ADA):** Attendance drives achievement. Our quarterly "Awesome Attendance" rewards kept student motivation high all year.
- **89% Family Engagement:** Nearly 90% of our families participated in parent-teacher conferences.
- **GOLD Circle of Quality:** Our Preschool for All program (serving 83 students) earned ExceleRate Illinois's highest distinction for excellence in early learning and instructional environments.
- **MAP & FastBridge Growth:** Spring benchmark scores showed our students outpacing national averages across core subjects:
 - **MAP Adaptive Assessments:** 70% Average to Above Average in Math | 72% in Reading
 - **FastBridge Benchmark Data:** 73% in Math | 74% in Reading



Classroom Upgrades & Tech Innovators

- **Co-Teaching Model:** General and special education teachers co-taught across multiple grade levels, offering enriched, differentiated instruction alongside specialists in art, music, physical education, and library.
- **Targeted Support:** Early Childhood Special Education and tiered reading/math interventions highlighted during each benchmark testing window.
- **Expanded Exploratory Courses (Grades 6–8):**
 - **6th Grade:** Art, Drama, Digital Literacy, STEM
 - **7th Grade:** Art, Civics I, Personal Finance, STEM

- **8th Grade:** Art, Astronomy, Civics II, STEM
- **STEM Upgrades:** Hands-on learning with 3D printing, robotics, and simple machines. A new 3D printer and extra supplies were secured via grant funds for the upcoming academic year!
- **New Fall 2026 Curricula:**
 - **K–2:** *Go Math*
 - **5th Grade:** *McGraw Hill Social Studies – Making A New Nation*
 - **Special Education:** *EBLI (Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction)*

Buildings & Grounds: Infrastructure Upgrades

Maintaining our 1966 facility requires proactive care. Building on recent roof, plumbing, bathroom, and locker room updates, our maintenance team tackled major structural improvements this year:

Sewer Main Replacement: Cut through concrete foundation slab along the entire length of the school hallways to replace the original 1966 sewer main. New modern vinyl plank flooring will be installed throughout the hallways.

PreK & Maintenance Storage Shed: Construction has begun on a storage shed for Prek and school supplies and storage.

Space Planning: While overall enrollment has shifted historically, expanded specialized offerings (PreK, sensory, OT/PT, special education) means district leadership continues to monitor potential additional space.

Cash Flow & Financial Health

- **State Financial Rating:** Earned the highest **4.0 Financial Recognition Rating** from ISBE with a healthy budget surplus in FY26.
- **Tax Levy:** The grade school tax rate sits at **2.945**—a **decrease of over 3 cents** from last year, down **8 cents** from three years ago, and a **50-cent reduction over the past decade**.
- The district intentionally collected less in tax revenues during the last levy than legally allowed—leaving money "on the table" to ease the burden on local taxpayers for the first time in district history.

Redbird Extracurricular Brag Sheet

Offering **20 levels of competition across 9 sports**, our DCS student-athletes and performers shined:

-  **Baseball:** Regional Champions—capturing the program's first regional title since 2010!
-  **Cross Country:** Dean Carey and Elizabeth Stipanovich qualified for and competed at State.
-  **Basketball:** 7th Grade Boys won the IVC Conference Championship and finished **4th overall in Illinois!** CLASS Basketball also hosted **160 K-5th graders across 20 teams**.

- 🏃 **Track & Field:** 8th Grade Girls won the Livingston County Championship; 7th Grade Girls finished as County Runners-Up (8 State Qualifiers). Nate Wilkey earned **two state medals** (6th in Discus, 7th in Shot Put), alongside State Qualifier Nash Miner.
- 🗣️ **Speech Team:** Blew the competition away at IESA Speech with **33 First-Place finishes**, 10 Seconds, and **5 Best of Day Top Honors** (Duet: Van Patten & Henry Sassenger; Small Group: Kataleya Cortez, Lucy Cotter, Lilly Stone, Blake Taplin; Solo: Pari Patel; Improv: Blayze Halstead, Breckin Halstead, Van Patten, Henry Sassenger, Blake Taplin)!
- 🎵 **Music & Performing Arts:**
 - **Band:** Earned a **I (Superior)** rating at IESA Organizationals! Henry Sassenger (piano) won **Best of Day** at Solo & Ensemble.
 - **Choir:** Allie Hansen and Gunnar Severns performed in the ILMEA District 3 Jr. Chorus. The 7th/8th grade choir earned a II (Excellent) rating, with Allie Hansen earning **Best of Day** for her vocal solo.
 - **Music Upgrades:** Added 3 new sound shells (thanks to Music Boosters!), a new electric piano from Mrs. Schultz, and expanded performance gear.
 - **Drama:** Staged an awesome April production of *Myth-Guided*.
- 🧠 **Academic Teams:**
 - **Math Team:** 7th grade took 3rd at County; 8th grade took 2nd overall (Van Patten & Jace Jensen tied for 1st individually!). 7th grade also took 3rd at IVC (Leo Jahn 3rd individually).
 - **Spelling:** Joshua Shireman won the school bee under the new Scripps format. Joshua and Allison Hansen represented DGS at the IVC Bee (Allison tied for 1st in 7th grade; Joshua tied for 2nd in 6th grade).
 - **Scholastic Bowl:** Finished a great season capped with a **Regional Championship**!

🦅 DWIGHT TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL #230 (Grades 9–12)

Total Enrollment: 209 Students | **ISBE Designation:** ★ Commendable (*Zero underperforming student subgroups!*)

📊 Academic Milestones

- **Targeted Interventions:** *Exact Path* integration drove measurable increases in students meeting MAP benchmarks across Math, Reading, and English.
- **Honors & Excellence:** DTHS celebrated **8 Illinois State Scholars** and recognized **58 Board Scholars** holding a 4.0 GPA for the entire school year!
- **Early Release Incentive:** Continued success offering targeted intervention time for struggling students while rewarding high academic performance and attendance.
- **College Credit Pipelines:**
 - Launching **AP Language & Composition** (2026–2027) for Juniors and Seniors, opening the door for **AP Literature & Composition** in 2027–2028 (up to 2 full years of college English credit).
 - Added **AP Chemistry** to science offerings, with **AP Biology** planned for future rollout.
 - Welcoming **Nicole Leigh** as our new High School Math teacher!



Campus Facilities: Modernization & Track Overhaul

While DTHS was built in 1956, dedicated custodial care and targeted renovations keep our campus performing at a college level.

- **Completed HVAC & Restroom Builds:** Last summer's major HVAC heating/cooling overhaul and total remodel of the auditorium/gymnasium restrooms were huge successes.
- **Summer 2026 Track Renovation:** Our original all-weather track (installed in 1988–89) is undergoing a **complete renovation** this summer!
- **Looking Ahead:** Summer 2027 will focus on an overhaul of our original high school locker rooms.



High School Financial Ledger

- **State Financial Rating:** Maintained a perfect **4.0 Financial Recognition Status** with a surplus across all operating funds (excluding O&M facility investments).
- **Tax Rate Stability:** The tax rate stands at 2.349—reflecting an **80-cent decrease over the past 10 years**.
- DTHS left **over \$1.6 Million in tax funds "on the table"** during the tax levy, collecting significantly less than legally permitted to support property owners.



In-House Transportation Operations

Operating our own transportation department continues to save money while delivering a flexible, top-tier service. Led by Director Angie Goley, our **30-staff member department** serves both Dwight districts. With our bus lease expiring this year, the district leased several new feature-packed buses and purchased a few existing fleet buses.



Fine Arts & Culture Triumphs

- **Trojan Marching Band:** Performing their field show *Rhapsody*, the Marching Trojans won **3rd place at Washington, 2nd place at Normal and Danville**, and 5th at Western Illinois University. Four students made the **Bradley University Honor Band**: Katy Dolan, Madlynn Lucas, Ethan Marques, and Ella Payne.
- **Concert Band & Choir:** DTHS Concert Band earned a **I (Superior)** rating at IHSA Organizationals for the first time in years! Concert Choir earned a **II (Excellent)**. Solo & Ensemble brought in 7 Superiors, 6 Excellents, and Katy Dolan (mallets) earned **Best of Day!**
- **ILMEA All-State Honors:** Mikey Groves and William Richards performed in the All-District Choir. **Mikey Groves earned his 2nd consecutive selection to the ILMEA All-State Choir Festival!**
- **Drama Club:** Staged classic performances of *Harvey* in the fall and *The Addams Family* musical in the spring.
- **Math Team:** Freshman **Michael Josefik** advanced to the ICTM State Math Competition, earning a **9th-place state medal in Algebra!**



Trojan Athletics: State Champions & Record-Breakers

Sport	Highlights & Achievements
 Football	Back-to-back IHSA Elite Eight playoff runs (7–4 record). Senior Evan Cox named All-State.
 Volleyball	First Regional Championship since 2009 , Tri-County 3rd Place, and tied school record with 19 wins.
 Cross Country	Mikayla Chambers (Girls) and Joe Faris (Boys) qualified for the IHSA State Meet.
 Golf	Girls placed 2nd in Tri-County. Bella Dinelli advanced to Day 2 of the IHSA State Finals (53rd place).
 Basketball	Girls logged a 22–12 record (Mikayla Chambers 3rd Team All-State). Boys won 19 games (All-Conference: Joey Starks & Joe Duffy).
 Wrestling	Avery Crouch finished 6th in Illinois (135 lbs). Gavin Bafia qualified for State for the 2nd straight year.
 Track & Field	Boys Team placed 4th overall at State! Graham Meister won Class 1A State Championships in BOTH Shot Put and Discus (setting new Indoor/Outdoor 1A State records). Joe Faris finished as State Runner-Up in the 800m . For the girls, Mikayla Chambers placed 4th at State in the 800m , breaking school and conference records.
 Softball	McKenna Woodcock named 2nd Team All-State; Taylor Heath earned 3rd Team All-State.
 Baseball	Ayden Collom earned 1st Team All-State; Evan Cox and Joey Starks received All-State Honorable Mentions.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2026–2027 SCHOOL YEAR

As we step into the 2026–2027 school year, Dwight Public Schools stands on an exceptional foundation of financial stability, top-tier educator retention, and academic momentum.

Administration Transitions

- **Curriculum Direction:** **Mrs. Julie Schultz** transitions into her new role as **Director of Curriculum and Instruction**, bringing her expertise to elevate district-wide instruction.
- **Grade School Principal:** **Mrs. Michelle Tyne**, a strong veteran educator, officially stepped into the Principal role on July 1 to lead Dwight Common School into its next chapter!

Key Priorities

1. **Attracting & Retaining Talent:** Maintaining our strong teacher retention rate by fostering an environment where quality educators thrive.

2. **Instructional Alignment:** Utilizing built-in School Improvement Days along with MAP benchmark testing to drive classroom interventions and continuous student growth.
3. **Facility Stewardship:** Continuing long-term maintenance plans across our historic campuses to provide safe, modern learning spaces.

Thank you to our families, staff, board members, and community for making Dwight Public Schools an incredible place to learn and grow!

Sincerely,

Josh DeLong

Superintendent, Dwight Public Schools



DISTRICT LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

Dwight Common School Board of Education

- **President:** Jaimie Mallaney
- **Vice President:** Mark Christenson
- Marc Ellis, Lori Bowman, Chuck Trainor, Ryan Kodat, Brad Hansen

Dwight Township High School Board of Education

- **President:** Joel Sandeno
- **Vice President:** Max Sulzberger
- Eric Scheuer, Chris Bunting, Jake Tjelle, Kim Frauli, Erin Connor

Administrative Leadership

- **Director of Curriculum & Instruction:** Julie Schultz
- **GS Principal:** Michelle Tyne | **GS Assistant Principal:** Michael Bennett
- **HS Principal:** Andy Pittenger | **HS Dean of Students:** Amie Thompson
- **Athletic Director (GS/HS):** Jacob Scheuer

District Office & Support Leaders

- **Bookkeeper/District Secretary:** Deb Conroy
- **Payroll/HR:** Amie Hogan | **Secretary:** Jennifer Statler
- **Director of Buildings & Grounds:** Jack Connor | **Assistant Director:** Brian Berta
- **Technology Director:** Logan Murray | **Assistant Director:** Demetrius Skrapates
- **Transportation Director:** Angie Goley