

2019-2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



DECATUR CITY SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION



OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020



This year was very different, but...

our mission to promote and enhance educational excellence for
all students in Decatur City Schools

didn't change.

**OUR
WORK**

**OUR
DIFFERENCE MAKERS**

**OUR
SUPPORTERS**

**OUR
FINANCIALS**

**OUR
TEAM**

Our Work

Expanding Greenpower

Goblin Kit Cars for 4th - 6th Graders Designing, Building & Racing Their Own Goblin Car.
*Extension of the Greenpower Program



Decatur Math Initiative

Professional Development to Increase Teaching Skills & Student Engagement in an Effort to Close the Achievement Gap in Math for 4,303 Pre-Kindergarten-5th Graders



Welding Academy

Contributed to the Renovation & Expansion of the Welding Academy from 20 Students Per Year to 70 Students in 2020-2021



Computer Science Resources

Teacher Training, Tools & Materials to Enhance Elementary & Middle School Computer Science Courses



Engineering Academy

750+ 7th & 8th Graders Designing, Testing & Printing Projects for Learning Blade Curriculum & Greenpower Race Car using 3-D printers



Ramping Up Reading

1,744,233,619 Words Read by Kindergarten - 8th Graders Since August 2018 & Invested in the Purchase of Brand-New Non-Fiction Books District-Wide

Dream Big Students

Supporting 100+ At-Risk Students with Tools for Success Upon Graduation



Boosting Connectivity

Funded 920 of 1,300 Verizon MiFi Devices for One Month during Quarantine in the Spring of 2020



Our Difference Makers

We are so happy to celebrate these individuals as our Difference Makers! These ladies have exhibited extra ordinary resilience during one of our most challenging years and we salute them.



Tina Hill

7th Grade English Language Arts Teacher
Decatur Middle School

Being a teacher in 2020 has changed me...

It has taught me that plans aren't as important as I thought, that kids need emotional support more than any lesson, and that I am capable of doing (really) hard things.

After twenty-six years in the classroom, I felt like I was on top of my teaching career. However, during the first week of distance learning, I felt like a loser.

I told my principal, "I feel like a first-year teacher again, only worse." His response stuck with me. "It feels worse because you have built years of what has worked well for you," he said. He then followed with, "You have the background and you have the experience."

I considered my options. Do I change my expectations? Do I lower them? Do I overhaul everything for the sake of the pandemic? My principal told me to keep my expectations high in magnitude and low in rigidity. The conversation ended with him saying, "I know Tina Hill can do it; Tina Hill just doesn't know she can do it."

I listened. Reflecting on the first semester, I have realized this advice has transformed my students and me into agents of optimal learning. My outstanding co-teacher, Ms. Emily Hampton, and I have helped each other broaden our scopes to provide meaningful and fun instruction.

For the longest time, I viewed distance learning as limiting my quality of instruction. I thought, "Well, I won't be able to do this because it just won't be the same through Google Meetings." It turns out I was right.

It won't be the same, but I have a choice. Should I accept those limits, or should I embrace the potential to create promising outcomes? I have chosen the latter.

Is everything perfect? Absolutely not. There is a long way to go. There will be lots of magical moments and wins, with lots of failure. Nonetheless, I will fail with the intention of finding a different path to follow.

The students are excited to be in school, whether in-person, blended, or virtual. Many of them are already super tech-savvy. They are turning their cameras on. They are laughing. One thing that I notice almost daily is when I dismiss kids to their next class, many want to stick around and just talk to me. Not for anything academic....just to talk. As crazy as this may sound, I feel like I can relate to my students more than I ever have in my entire career. I am learning with them. I am growing with them. I hope we can build trust for one another throughout this time. I am hopeful for a better tomorrow.



Michelle Matthews

Custodian
Austin Junior High School

I believe that every child has the right to have somebody in their corner...

Sometimes they need a little encouragement to do right. Since 2006 I have taken this role to heart. Personal relationships with students and faculty is why I love my job. When I started at Cedar Ridge Middle School, Ken Priest was there to mentor me. I saw how he interacted with his peers and the students and I knew I could make an impact in my position as well.

This year has brought its own set of challenges. I spent the first half of the year taking care of my husband. The stress of working in a pandemic, on top of worrying about infecting him made me turn to prayer even more than ever before. My principal supported me and my role as caretaker but still allowed me to fill my role at AJHS.

I thank God for allowing me to work in a place where I had so much support from faculty and friends. After my husband's sudden passing at the beginning of December I felt the love even more from my AJHS family. I could never thank God enough for placing them into my life during that difficult time.

Everyday I come to work I try to show love through my words and actions. Everybody gets a smile and positive encouragement for their day. I pray that they see Jesus through me.



Sally Savas

Library Media Specialist
Oak Park Elementary School

I often tell people that I work with some of the best people in the world...

Our teachers find great joy in seeing students gain knowledge, develop interests, create new things and grow in maturity. DCS has the benefit of teachers with a wealth of content knowledge as well as experience in classroom management and strategies to reach every learner. But this has been a year like no other year. We have been stretched to be more adaptable. We have been challenged to meet students in classrooms and online. We had to seek out and find powerful new methods to reach students when our tried and true methodologies were not always effective in the new environment of social distancing or online learning.

I seized on the pandemic as an opportunity. I make it a habit to model grit, resilience, and a positive attitude. If you can see every crisis as an opportunity, you can look beyond the loss and seize the promise. I have taught technology and encouraged tech innovation in my

building as long as I have been a media specialist. This year teachers had to abandon some of our old ways to engage students and enrich their curriculum. Technology was no longer something a teacher might see as a fun activity on Friday afternoon. It was critical to the delivery of instruction and communication to parents and students. The engaging tech resources that some thought were "extra" suddenly became essential. When things became hard, teachers came looking for help and I made sure they knew I was glad to see them and eager to help! This goes for students and parents as well!

My heart goes out to all those struggling. The pandemic has not just been a health concern. It has an economic, developmental and mental health impact. I am so happy that I could serve as an important resource to help teachers learn and manage new instructional resources. I keep track of all the devices that are issued and help with troubleshooting issues or putting devices in for repair. The DCS IT Team has been fabulous about quick response to questions and we have all learned so much! I also offer direct help to students and families as they learn about and best use the wonderful resources DCS has provided to keep our students learning and growing though this difficult time.

The investment I make to insure students and teachers stay connected and can confidently utilize the best tools provided by Decatur City Schools for instruction and learning will have lasting impact on the future- for our students and our community. I appreciate the Decatur City Schools Foundation and its contributors for their tremendous contribution to the families in this community.

Thank You DCS



Margaret Greer
2019-2020 President
2020-2021 Board Member

I am proud to have been a part of Decatur City Schools as a teacher and administrator and now as a board member of the Decatur City Schools Foundation. However, my pride has been elevated to new heights as I have observed their dedicated mission of continuing "school" through unprecedented times during this pandemic.

I am so thankful to everyone who plays a role in the everyday workings of "school." It is definitely a team effort and everyone involved deserves a huge THANK YOU from this community! The partnership between the school system and the Foundation is a win-win for Decatur!

- Margaret

Our Supporters

"I have had the pleasure of being a principal at an Elementary, Middle, Junior High and High School in Decatur City. I have seen first hand how our financial contributions to the DCSF directly impact our students! The DCSF truly works to provide for all students in Decatur City Schools."



Demond Garth, Principal
Austin High School
Payroll Deduction Supporter

"Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company has an 85 year-old reputation built on supporting our community. There is a strong family tradition of supporting the area churches, community projects and schools. Especially schools. By investing in our children's future through DCSF, we provide an enhanced community for all of us. We are proud to partner with Decatur City School Foundation in supporting all of our students in the community."



Sandra Stephenson
Public Relations & Event Coordinator
Small Business Supporter

"Cook's Pest Control is grateful for the opportunity to invest in our children's education and development by supporting the Decatur City Schools Foundation. Their work, including continued improvement analysis, student achievement initiatives, and career readiness programs, is important, meaningful work worth investing in for our children, our families, and our community. We at Cook's have served our local families, businesses, and industry for 93 years and continue to see a bright future for Decatur, due in large part to our collective investments in the next generation."



Brian Cook
President & CEO
Corporate Supporter

Reflecting on this Year



Stevi Price
Executive Director

I'm sure you've heard the saying, "these are unprecedented times." I know you have.

But when I think about this year, I believe our overarching statement should be "resilience." Resilience in our homes as parents and guardians became instructors. Resilience of our teachers as many of them taught virtually for the first time. Resilience of our students as they adjusted to the new normal. Resilience of our technology department as they worked countless hours supporting all of Decatur City Schools. And so on...

This pandemic, with all of its' turmoil and pain, forced us out of our comfort zones and gave birth to something new. We will never be the same. It forced us to become out-of-the-box thinkers and diligent problem solvers. We had to decide whether we wanted to stay stuck in an "unprecedented" time or be resilient.

I choose resilience. I think we all have and for that, I am so thankful.

- Stevi

Believe. GROW. Achieve.

CAMPAIGN 2019 - 2024

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Renasant Bank & Renasant Asset
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The Baker Foundation
Skip & Margie Thompson
Wells Fargo Foundation

GOLD PARTNER **\$5,000 - \$9,999**

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Fite Building Company
Kiwanis Club of Decatur
Plastic Recyclers Southeast
Redstone Federal Credit Union
Rotary Club of Decatur

SILVER PARTNER **\$2,500 - \$4,999**

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Red Sage Communications*
Douglas Shoemaker
Drew & Mary Ila Ward

BRONZE PARTNER **\$1,000 - \$2,499**

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Jason Palmer - State Farm Agency
Kelly Services
Kohl's
Lee Lott
TVA
United Launch Alliance

PARTNER **UP TO \$999**

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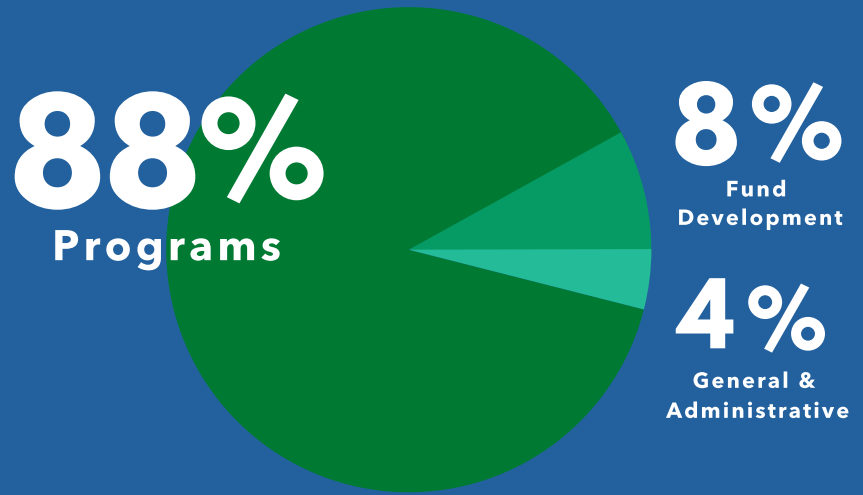
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Our Financials



\$966,541

Funds Invested

Contact us at (256) 616-1734 for a copy of our Annual Audit or Form 990.

To Our Donors



Penny Townson
2019 - 2020 Vice President
2020-2021 President

With the uncertainty facing us all, the Foundation's Board of Directors never questioned the generosity of our donors. Thank you to each of you for your confidence in the work we do. It is truly life changing for our students. The programs and resources the Foundation funds are building an educational system to support current and future students in the Decatur City Schools district. I am proud of the work of our staff that brought us to this point and grateful for every dollar donated by each of our benefactors.

Together, we have helped over 8,000 students and assisted in maintaining equity in the classroom. Thank you for making this possible.

- Penny



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Tour the Career Academies of Decatur from the comfort of your home! Simply hover over the QR code as if to snap a picture. The link will appear.

