



## Phase 1 Community Engagement Report

At Bloomingdale School District 13, we ensure an exceptional, individualized education for each and every child. We partner with our parents and community to help kids grow.

Our students graduate as high performing, well-rounded kids of good character. They perform well above the state average, in the top three of DuPage County elementary school districts in math and top two in English. We accomplish this while spending the least per pupil of any elementary school district in the county. Our staff does a fantastic job making the most of what we have.

But with the cost of education rising as student needs increase, and our district receiving limited state and federal support, we're starting to struggle to even maintain what we have, let alone make the improvements our residents are requesting.

Despite our limited funding, we've found a way to succeed without having to go to taxpayers for over 30 years for additional support. But if we are going to fix our aging infrastructure, comply with the state's mandate for full-day kindergarten, and give our students the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments they deserve, we will need additional funding.

In an effort to determine the priorities of our residents, District 13 began taking active steps in August to engage the community and solicit feedback. During Phase 1 of this process, we developed messaging, recruited a community-based committee to lead these efforts, engaged key influencers, coordinated discussion with the Community Committee, and engaged the community digitally to discuss the district's successes, opportunities for improvement, and obstacles ahead.

We collected feedback from the community during this time in different ways, including through notes taken of all direct communications, feedback provided on digital forms at the Community Committee meeting and responses to a publicly available feedback form available on the district's website. We received good levels of engagement so far, with 87 residents participating through the Community Committee and online during Phase 1 and 75 completing the Feedback Form. The community is clearly engaged in determining the district's path forward.

We will continue our efforts to engage the community through August of 2024 to determine the vision of our schools going forward. In Phase 2, we will take the feedback gathered in Phase 1 and create a "menu"



of possible projects for discussion. We will present this menu of potential projects to the Community Committee and the general public, along with additional information on each project including advantages and disadvantages of each, samples and renderings (as available), and associated costs. Feedback will be solicited directly, on feedback forms at Community Committee meetings and public engagement sessions, online on the district's website, and through a public phone survey. Phase 2 will be conducted from January through March, with reports made regularly to the district and board, including a Phase 2 report in March.

## **Messaging**

We developed messaging to properly communicate how we got to this point, what our successes and challenges have been, and how to approach the path forward. This messaging detailed recent progression and improvements as well as the district's infrastructure and funding challenges and limited opportunities as a result. The seven key takeaways from the messaging are below, and a full copy of the messaging is provided with this report.

- At Bloomingdale School District 13, we ensure an exceptional, individualized education for each and every child. We partner with our parents and community to help kids grow. It's the people who make this district special. As a small, community-based district, we're "small enough to care enough."
- You can see this District 13 difference in our students as they continue their education at Lake Park High School. Our students graduate as high performing, well-rounded kids of good character. They perform well above the state average, in the top three of DuPage County elementary school districts in math and top two in English.
- We accomplish this while spending the least per pupil of any elementary school district in the county. We use zero-based budgeting, evaluating our spending every year to ensure we are being as efficient as possible, reducing costs, and focusing our funding into classrooms. Our staff does a fantastic job making the most of what we have.
- But with the cost of education rising as student needs increase, and our district receiving limited state and federal support, we're starting to struggle to even maintain what we have, let alone make the improvements our residents are requesting.
- Despite our limited funding, we've found a way to succeed without having to go to taxpayers for over 30 years for additional support. But if we are going to fix our aging infrastructure, comply with the state's mandate for full day kindergarten, and give our students the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments they deserve, we will need additional funding.
- Investing in our schools would give our students and staff safer, more secure, and sustainable learning environments. Our kids and teachers would be able to thrive, with high level learning opportunities and students encouraged to create and collaborate. And we'd be able to provide more meaningful and positive community service projects to connect our students to our community.
- Over the next year, our community will be collaborating on a plan for the future of our schools. Please participate in this important community engagement. Together, we will determine our path forward.



### **Community Committee**

We developed a committee of individuals who will provide direct, informed input throughout this effort. The committee is made up of a cross-section of District 13 stakeholders, including parents, teachers, taxpayers without children in the district, business owners, seniors, and elected officials. The committee has been formalized and tasked with the responsibility of actively gathering feedback from the community to determine what they would like to see for the future of District 13. The first Community Committee meeting took place November 29 and the second committee meeting is scheduled for February 21. Committee engagement will continue throughout all phases of this process.

### **Public Engagement (Online)**

The district posted the Phase 1 presentation and feedback form on the community engagement website and promoted it through emails to members of the community. As a result, 75 members of the community visited the website and completed the online feedback form.

During Phase 2, we will host four public engagement sessions (three in person and one virtual) to ensure feedback is received from the public and community input is driving the process.

### **Feedback Report**

Attached is a detailed report of the feedback that was collected during Phase 1 of this process, which includes feedback from the Community Committee and the public via the online feedback form on the district website.

