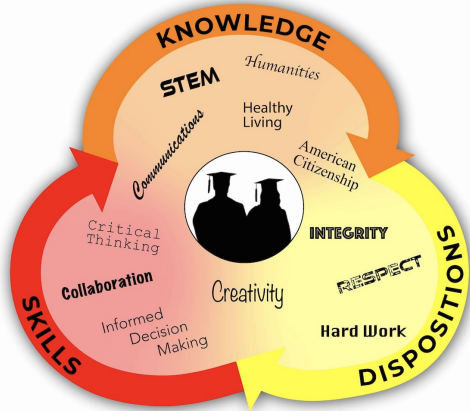




Duchess County School District Strategic Plan: The ABCs

What We Want

Graduates of
Duchess County School District
have the ...



... to lead fulfilling lives.

What Is Holding Us Back

We Have 3 Big Problems

1. GAPS

We have too many students who "advance" from grade to grade, yet they have huge **gaps** in their learning.

2. NASA

We have too many students who could be on track to work for **NASA** or win a Pulitzer Prize, but are not being pushed to the extra level of rigor that would prepare them for these types of achievements.

3. SETTLERS

We have too many students who are fully capable of getting A's and B's, but **settle** for D's.

And 2 More Underlying Issues

4. ATTENDANCE

We have too many students who miss too much school with low **attendance**.

5. ENGAGEMENT

We have too many students who don't **engage** fully in the learning activities when they are in class.

What We Are Going To Do About It



A

ccountability -

B

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C

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Accountability - Based Competency System

Duchesne County School District is seeking a return to old-school principles using modern-day tools to help students achieve at higher and higher levels. We use the word *accountability* because of our belief that each student will learn best when they take ownership of their learning and when the teachers and family work in harmony to support each child. Success for students will come as we all do our part and are accountable to each other.

After conducting a thorough review of what is holding our kids back, it was determined that there were 5 factors:

- 1) **GAPS:** Too many students with too many gaps in their learning move from grade to grade.
- 2) **NASA:** Too many top students who could go directly to work for NASA or win Pulitzer Prizes are not being pushed enough.
- 3) **SETTLERS:** Too many students who are capable of As and Bs, are settling for Ds.
- 4) **ATTENDANCE:** Too many students miss too much school.
- 5) **ENGAGEMENT:** Too many students don't engage enough with the lessons at school.

The ABCs are designed to incrementally address each area over the next several years. For this school year the Accountability portion will be implemented by all schools. The academic portion has already been implemented in the elementary schools and now the junior high students will add another element of competency.

Students in elementary school are accountable to move from one grade level to the next by attending school, engaging in class, and demonstrating a basic level of understanding on each vital competency.

If a student does not accomplish these requirements, the school will provide ample opportunities to re-learn and re-try.

If a student still does not meet the requirements, they may need to repeat a grade or a course so they have the extra time they need to demonstrate competency.

What are vital competencies? They are the very most important concepts taught at school. In elementary it is 2-3 concepts in reading, 2-3 in math, 1 science or social studies per grade. (Out of the roughly 100 total state standards per grade level.)

Progress will be reported in two areas: Accountability Grades and Academic Grades.



A Accountability - B Based C Competency S System



Accountability

(All Schools)

As we separate the reporting of accountable behaviors and academics, we recognize that we need to make accountability grading more clear for parents. Therefore, families will be provided with a rubric of how the accountability grade will be earned. The categories of accountability will also be recorded on the report card and in powerschool.

The three areas of accountability are:

COMPACT: This grade will be based on a matrix which combines the number of classes missed and the academic grade. The better the grade, the more slack a student gets on attendance.

CONDUCT: Each student will be on a specific conduct level in each class. Students can work to improve their level with improved behavior.

CLASSWORK: Assignments must be completed at competent levels to receive a good accountability grade. Each teacher will decide whether to use this aspect of accountability. If they choose to grade classwork, they will record this in the "Assignments" section of powerschool. Each assignment will simply be marked "completed" at competent levels or it will not.



Academics

(Elementary Schools)

Students will still be given a regular grade on all 25-40 priority standards just like we have been doing for the past several years.

However, we will now also add the requirement that 5-7 of the most vital competencies per grade must be passed to move on. Each student will be provided with the time and resources they need in order to learn.

If an elementary student is struggling with a particular vital competency, teachers will partner with parents to develop a plan going forward to help the student gain the necessary skills.

We are intentionally separating academics from behaviors so that parents will get a true indication of how their child is attaining the learning standards.

(Secondary Schools)

Students in junior high will participate in the academic portion of the ABCs by passing vital competencies and also by delivering a Defense of Learning.

Students in high school will participate in the academic portion of the ABCs beginning with the 2028-29 school year.



Duchesne County
School District



ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

BE PRESENT



BE ENGAGED



BEHAVE

Attending class is vital to learning at high levels because teachers are preparing meaningful and relevant lessons that can't just be made up later. The discussions and the real-time corrections that happen in class provide the depth of learning that can only come by being there.

Plus, success in your future career will depend on you being where you are supposed to be.

Active Participation in class is crucial to gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to a fulfilling life. It is not enough to merely show up. Engaging in the lessons each day will be the catalyst for learning and it will enrich the experience exponentially.

Plus, it just makes school more enjoyable when you are active and doing rather than simply sitting there

Courtesy is an attribute that is deeply appreciated by everyone. Your conduct at school has a big impact on how well other students are able to learn. When you behave as expected, our whole school runs better and it makes it a more positive experience for students and staff.

Plus, conducting yourself appropriately builds respect from others. You develop a good reputation that helps you greatly.

Accountability is the bedrock of a thriving school system.

We challenge our students to take ownership of their learning by being present, staying engaged, and maintaining positive conduct.

We challenge our families and staff to support students in their efforts.

When adults and students commit to high standards of accountability, we create a culture of excellence that helps us all to lead a fulfilling life.



Part of our ABCs
(Accountability Based Competency System)



Duchesne County School District Accountability Compact



Students: Be Present! Be Engaged! Behave!

When you ... are Present in classes 95% of the time or more
Engage in class every day
Behave in school so all can learn

And ...

Parents:

When you ... Ensure your child is present in class 95% of the time or more
Encourage them to engage in class every day
Expect them to behave in school so all can learn

And ...

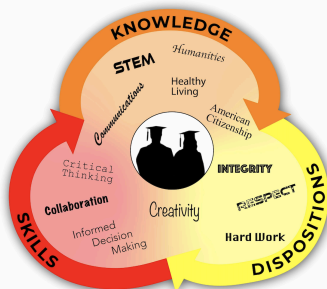
Staff:

We will ... Engage students in meaningful and relevant learning activities every day
Expect and reinforce good behavior
Do all in our power to keep students safe
Treat each other, each student, and families with dignity and respect

Then ...

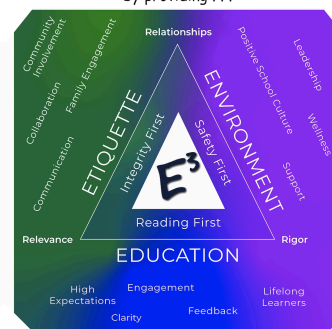
Each student will acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead fulfilling lives.

Graduates of
Duchesne County School District
have the ...



... to lead fulfilling lives.

Staff of Duchesne County School District
prepare students to lead fulfilling lives
by providing ...





Duchesne County School District

Accountability Grading Proficiency Scale



Be Present! Be Engaged! Behave!



- Beginning with the 2024-25 School Year:
 - Accountability grades will be recorded on the report card.
 - Programs, rewards, and/or extracurricular eligibility are impacted.
 - Study Hall and/or other interventions will be required for those in yellow/red on the compact matrix.
- Beginning with the 2026-27 School Year:
 - No academic credit toward graduation is awarded if any of the Accountability grades are a U.
 - The U can be made up, and academic credit awarded, if the required conditions are met. School administrators will determine the conditions/contract based on severity.

	Compact Grade	Conduct Grade	Classwork * Grade
H (Honors)	<input type="checkbox"/> H (Blue) metric	<input type="checkbox"/> On Level 0	<input type="checkbox"/> All/almost all work is competently completed (90-100%)
S (Satisfactory)	<input type="checkbox"/> S (Green) metric	<input type="checkbox"/> On Level 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Large majority of work is competently completed (70-89.9%)
N (Needs Improvement)	<input type="checkbox"/> N (Yellow) metric	<input type="checkbox"/> On Level 2 or 3 <i>(at 3, teachers create an intervention plan)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Most work is competently completed (50-69.9%)
U (Unsatisfactory)	<input type="checkbox"/> U (Red) metric	<input type="checkbox"/> On Level 4 or Worse <i>(must include admin and a contract)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Most work is NOT competently completed (0-49.9%)
Source	<i>Compact Matrix (Absences & Grade)</i>	<i>Conduct Level Chart</i>	<i>“Assignments” in Powerschool</i>
Make Ups?	<i>Yes. Get the Grade Up</i>	<i>Yes. Improve the Level</i>	<i>Yes. Get the work done at competent levels.</i>

* Classwork grades are only for those teachers who use “collected” for the “assignments” in Powerschool. Teachers establish the cut score for each assignment at a “competent” level with modifications for those with an IEP. There must be a minimum of 6 “assignments” in Powerschool for this grade to be given.



Duchesne County School District

Compact Grading Matrix



Secondary

		PRESENT																	
		<i>(# of Days <u>Absent</u> per quarter per class. All absences count, except hospitalization.)</i>																	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+
GRADE	As																		
	Bs																		
	Cs																		
	Ds																		
	F/M																		
Citizenship Grades																			
H	Honors level of attendance. Keep up the good work!																		
S	Warning: on watch. Keep your grades up and attend class to avoid dropping any further.																		
N	You are in study hall sessions until you get back into the green or blue. Coordination with parents will take place.																		
U	An Attendance Contract is created in coordination with parents. You are in study hall until the conditions of the contract are met. Possible service opportunities, etc.																		

(for Pass/Fail Courses)

Secondary

		PRESENT																	
		<i>(# of Days <u>Absent</u> per quarter per class. All absences count, except hospitalization.)</i>																	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+
GRADE	P																		
	F																		



Duchesne County School District Compact Grading Matrix



Elementary

		PRESENT																			
		(# of Days <u>Absent</u> per quarter. All absences count, except hospitalization.)																			
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+		
GRADE	HP																				
	P																				
	AP																				
	NP																				
H	Honors level of attendance. Keep up the good work!																				
S	Warning: on watch. Keep your grades up and attend class to avoid dropping any further.																				
N	You are in study hall sessions until you get back into the green or blue. Coordination with parents will take place.																				
U	An Attendance Contract is created in coordination with parents. You are in study hall until the conditions of the contract are met. Possible service opportunities, etc.																				



Duchesne County School District Conduct Levels



Description	Possible Intervention(s)
Level 0 - Classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplary behavior in every school setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive relationships Fulfilling life Conduct Grade: H
Level 1 - Classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not following class or school rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior is corrected in class Informal Documentation Parents Notified By Teacher Conduct Grade: S
Level 2 - Classroom / School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated level 1 behaviors Distracting, Disrupting, Disrespecting Examples: <i>pushing, talking out, inappropriate language, etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal warning Teaching of replacement behaviors Behavior Tracker Parents Notified By Teacher/Admin Informal Documentation Conduct Grade: N
Level 3 - School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated level 1-2 behaviors Disrespecting, Defying, Destroying, Degrading Examples: <i>insults, obstinance, bullying, damaging, etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch DT or In-School Suspension Refocus Lesson Academic Probation Behavior Tracker Parents Notified Formal Documentation Intervention Plan Created Conduct Grade: N
Level 4 - School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated level 1-3 behaviors Destroying, Degrading Examples: <i>vaping, drugs, harassing, fighting, threats, etc.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-School Suspension Out-of-School Suspension Refocus Lesson Academic Probation Parents Notified Formal Documentation Contract Created Conduct Grade: U
Level 5 - School / District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated level 1-4 behaviors Distributing Illegal Substances, Dangerous, Weapon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out-of-School Suspension Home Placement for Instruction Individualized Plan Parents Notified Formal Documentation New Contract Created Conduct Grade: U
Level 6 - District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated level 1-5 behaviors, Weapon Failed School Contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expulsion / Home Placement Alternate Location of Instruction Individualized Plan Parents Notified Formal Documentation New Contract Created Conduct Grade: U
Level 7 - District / Juvenile System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failed District Contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Expulsion Entry into Juvenile System

* Based on situational severity, school administrators may determine that specific behaviors warrant skipping levels.



Duchesne County School District Conduct Contract



Level # _____

School:		Date:		Student:	
---------	--	-------	--	----------	--

Individualized Evidence-Based Behavior Intervention Plan

WHY? What conduct has caused you to be at this level?

ACTION PLAN What actions will improve your conduct in the future?

Follow-Up Timeline:

CONSEQUENCES Natural or Imposed.
Personal or Relationships.

NEEDS What do you need in order to succeed in the action plan?

Student: _____

Parent: _____

School: _____































Date: _____



Duchesne County School District Classwork Example



PowerTeacher Pro Assignments

Due Date	Category	Assignment	Collected
02/25/2026	Learning Intentions	10d. Solve Exponential Functions	  
02/25/2026	Learning Intentions	10e. Compare Linear and Exponential Models	  
02/24/2026	Practice Work	10d. Essay - Solve Exponential Equations	   
02/24/2026	Practice Work	10d. Practice1 - Solve Exponential Equations	   
02/24/2026	Practice Work	10d. Practice2 - Solve Exponential Equations	   
02/24/2026	Practice Work	10d. Re-practice - Solve Exponential Equations	   
02/24/2026	Practice Work	10e. Practice - Compare Linear and Exponential Mo	   
02/24/2026	Practice Work	10e. Re-practice - Compare Linear and Exponential	   

All 6 Practice Work assignments were turned in at competent levels as indicated by the green circle with a check mark in it.
The Classwork grade is an **H**.



Duchesne County
School District



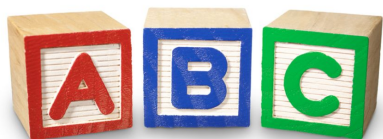
ACADEMIC SYSTEM



Reading, writing, and arithmetic are the subjects school is known for. However, our teachers provide excellent instruction in many other areas as well so that students are prepared to succeed in any of their life's pursuits. Some students have no idea what career to choose. Others have a plan. Either way, a large portion of young people end up changing fields - often more than once. Our objective is to provide a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions so that any future endeavor is a valid option. Going to the military? You will be ready. Directly to the work force? You will be ready. Is college or university your path? You will be ready.



In order to help fill the "gaps" in each student's understanding, our educators have prioritized the state standards in each subject and place a high emphasis on them. Some concepts are even more important and we have titled them "vital competencies." Every student is required to have at least a competent level of understanding on each of these vital concepts in order to move on to the next grade or the next course.



Part of our ABCs
(Accountability Based Competency System)



Duchesne County School District

ACADEMICS



Elementary

DCSD Vital Competencies

	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade
English Language Arts	A. Phonological Awareness (K.R.2)	D. Phonological Awareness (1.R.2)	G. Phonological Awareness (2.R.2)	K. Phonics Skills (3.R.3)	N. Informative Writing (4.W.2)	R. Informative Writing (5.W.2)	V. Argumentative Writing (6.W.1)
	B. Phonics Skills (K.R.3)	E. Phonics Skills (1.R.3)	H. Phonics Skills (2.R.3)	L. Main Idea with Details (3.R.6)	O. Phonics Skills, Accuracy, Fluency (4.R.3,4) P. Main Idea, Details (4.R.6)	S. Read with Accuracy & Fluency (5.R.4) T. Main Idea, Text Evidence, Summarizing (5.R.5&6)	W. Main Idea, Text Evidence, Summarizing (6.R.1&2)
Math	1. Numbers and Quantities (K.CC.4)	11. Count to 120 (1.NBT.1)	21. Hundreds, Tens, Ones (2.NBT.1)	31. Interpret Products of Whole Numbers (3.OA.1)	41. Comparing & Rounding Numbers (4.NBT.2&3)	51. Multi-Digit Multiplication (5.NBT.5)	61. Ratios: Reasoning (6.RP.3a)
	2. Represent Addition/Subtraction (K.OA.1)	12. Tens & Ones (1.NBT.2)	22. Fluently Add & Subtract Within 20 (2.OA.2)		42. Multiplying (4X1) (4.NBT.5)	52. Multi-Digit Division (5.NBT.6)	62. Divide Fractions (6.NS.1)
	3. Write Numbers 0-20 (K.CC.3)	13. Strategies To Add & Subtract Within 20 (1.OA.6)	23. Add/Subtract Within 100 (2.NBT.5)	32. Multiply/Divide Within 100 (3.OA.7)	43. Manipulating Fractions (4.NF.1&2)	53. Add & Subtract Fractions (5.NF.1b)	63. Positive & Negative Numbers (6.NS.5) 64. Equations (6.EE.7)
Science & Social Studies				SS3. First Amendment of the Bill of Rights (3.1.4)	SC4. Structures & Functions of Living Things (4.1.1)	SS5. The U.S. Constitution (5.3.1)	SC6. Atoms & Molecules (6.2.1)



Duchesne County School District

ACADEMICS



DCSD Vital Competency Intervention Protocol Steps

Whole Class Instruction Cycle

- 1. Send out the district [informative letter](#) (English) [informative letter](#) (Spanish), informing all stakeholders of how the vitals system works. (1st week of school)
- 2. Do a great job of Tier 1 & 2 instruction. This means teachers provide good whole-group instruction as well as normal interventions and assessments. These can be kept track of in the teacher's own records—not on the Vital Competency tracking system. (reference [Vital Competency List](#) and [Effective Teaching](#))
- 3. Use proficiency scales to give the end-of-quarter grade in PowerSchool **AND** give the DCSD Benchmark. (i.e. Enter a Q3 PowerSchool grade for each standard that is taught and assessed in Q3.)
- 4. Make the initial determination if each student passed the vital or not. (Use DCSD Determination Rules)
 - Now, it can be Recorded in the Vital Competency tracking system.

First Intervention Cycle

- 5. If a student did not pass, send a [form letter home](#) stating they did not pass a vital and are not on track. Use the letter to communicate the plan at school and the plan at home and provide a timeline.
 - Insert a copy of the parent letter in the student's cumulative file.
- 6. Provide interventions over the next several weeks. (Counsel with PLC and school leadership.)
- 7. Print and administer the first [DCSD Vital Assessment #1](#). Place the student's test, and results, in the student's cumulative file. Record it in the tracking system.
- 8. If the student passes the DCSD Vital Assessment #1, [contact parents](#). Celebrate!

Second Intervention Cycle

- 9. If the student did not pass the first DCSD Vital Assessment, the teacher and administrator meet with parents to determine the next steps (complete the [Intervention Contract and Documentation](#)).
 - Date of meeting: _____
- 10. Follow the plan. Provide interventions over the next several weeks. (Counsel with PLC/school leadership.)
- 11. Print and administer the second [DCSD Vital Assessment #2](#). Place the student's test, and results, in the student's cumulative file. Record it in the tracking system.
- 12. If the student passes the DCSD Vital Assessment #2, [contact parents](#). Celebrate!

Third Intervention Cycle

- 13. If the student did not pass the second DCSD Vital Assessment, meet with parents again to determine next steps (discuss the why, what, where, and how). Date of meeting: _____
- 14. Follow the plan. Provide intense interventions over the next several weeks. (Counsel with PLC/leaders.)
- 15. Print and administer the third [DCSD Vital Assessment #3](#). Place the student's test, and results, in the student's cumulative file. Record it in the tracking system.
- 16. If the student passes the DCSD Vital Assessment #3, [contact parents](#). Celebrate!

Fourth Intervention Cycle

- 17. If the student did not pass the third DCSD Vital Assessment, meet with the parents to determine next steps. At this point, SpEd Child Find, counseling referrals, and other more intense interventions can be discussed. Implement the agreed-upon interventions.
- 18. End of the School Year. If the student still has not passed all the vital competencies for their grade level, they will be able to go on to the next grade but will need to continue to receive intense interventions.

Ongoing Intervention

- 19. If, after the following school year (15-22 months of intervention), the student still has not passed all the vital competencies from the previous year's grade level, their individual plan must be followed, which may include retention.



Duchesne County School District **ACADEMICS**



DCSD Secondary Schools Vital Competencies

Purpose

The purpose of the vital competencies is to help students accomplish the mission of the school district, which is, "Graduates of Duchesne County School District have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead fulfilling lives." Within the Accountability-Based Competency System, these vital competencies allow for the continuation of traditional school with traditional instruction of the core standards, but it also includes the skills and dispositions our young people need so very much. By skills we are talking about critical thinking, collaboration, informed decision making and creativity. By dispositions we mean creativity, hard work, respect, and integrity.

Tasks

Within each competency area (knowledge, skills, dispositions) there will be 4 required tasks and 5-8 optional tasks. Obviously, each student will need to complete/pass all of the required tasks. Then, to achieve the distinguished (blue ribbon) status, students will need to complete at least 4 of the optional tasks as well.

Advocates

Each student will have an adult in the school who is their advocate to help them along their competency process. This advocate adult will help them understand the requirements, encourage them to do their best, provide guidance and feedback, and can pass off any of the items on the list. Subject area teachers can also pass off items on the list that are within their area.

Students are expected to work on all the competencies (required and optional) throughout the school year. Many of the competencies will be worked on naturally through the regular schedule of school. Students may also work on them when there is extension time in class and at home. Students are accountable to track their progress with the support of the school advocate and the family.

Traits

We are excited to roll out a school system that honors such time-tested traits as integrity, respect, hard work, creativity, informed decision making, and collaboration. Thank you for partnering with us as we strive to help our students live fulfilling lives!



Duchesne County School District ACADEMICS



DCSD VITAL COMPETENCIES - 7th Grade

→ Orange = Required. ● Brown = Optional. At least 4 brown items in each category are needed to achieve the level of Distinguished.

KNOWLEDGE



- Demonstrate a competent understanding of one aspect of Utah history _____
- Competently write an informational essay _____
- Competently solve one-step and two-step equations _____
- Create a model or engineer a device based on a scientific concept _____
- Complete and present a knowledge extension project _____
- Read a book (minimum of 120 pages or multiple books adding up to 120 pages) _____
- Present at least one piece of art you have created yourself _____
- Tell the story of an influential event in U.S. History _____
- Write an informational essay on how to stay safe online _____
- Set your own physical workout program and follow it for at least one month _____
- Compare and contrast positive and negative body image _____

Science
Technology
Engineering
Math
Humanities
American Cit.
Healthy Living
Communications

SKILLS



- Communicate your interpretation of the main idea from a written passage _____
- Describe something you see as a problem in the world and provide a solution _____
- Give evidence of collaborating with another person to achieve a goal _____
- Complete and present a skills extension project _____
- Create something new (or create plans for something new) _____
- List a possible future career and describe the factors that informed your decision _____
- Document participation in at least one extracurricular activity _____
- Write about a time when you had to seek information to make a good decision _____
- Invent or engineer something useful for your family _____
- Describe 5 ways to save money _____
- Research an ancestor and present their life history to your family _____

Communications
Critical Thinking
Collaboration
Informed Decision
Making
Creativity

DISPOSITIONS



- Describe a time when you demonstrated integrity _____
- Collect a statement from a person describing how you have shown them respect _____
- Describe a situation in which you worked hard to reach success _____
- Within this school year, provide evidence of creativity _____
- Achieve your yearly individual reading goal _____
- Complete and present a dispositions extension project _____
- Write the story of a time when you could have cheated, but you stayed honest _____
- Present something you created that brought you joy _____
- Describe a personal hero and explain the admirable dispositions they have lived by _____
- Provide at least 2 hours of service to help our community in a beneficial way _____
- Attain an H Accountability grade on the compact matrix for at least 3 terms _____

Creativity
Hard Work
Respect
Integrity



Duchesne County School District ACADEMICS



DCSD VITAL COMPETENCIES - 8th Grade

→ Orange = Required. ● Brown = Optional. At least 4 brown items in each category are needed to achieve the level of Distinguished.

KNOWLEDGE



- Demonstrate a competent understanding of the U.S. Constitution _____
- Competently write a persuasive essay _____
- Competently graph linear equations _____
- Create a model or engineer a device to demonstrate the structure of a molecule _____
- Complete and present a knowledge extension project _____
- Produce at least one original work of art you have created _____
- Read a book (minimum of 140 pages or multiple books adding up to 140 pages) _____
- Write an original poem with at least 16 lines _____
- Describe one influential event in U.S. history _____
- Write a short story with at least 1,500 words _____
- Compare and contrast good eating habits vs. addictions _____

Science
Technology
Engineering
Math
Humanities
American Cit.
Healthy Living
Communications

SKILLS



- Communicate your interpretation of the main idea from a written passage _____
- Describe something you see as a problem in the world and provide a solution _____
- Give evidence of collaborating with another person to achieve a goal _____
- Complete and present a skills extension project _____
- Describe a time when you worked as a mediator to help two people resolve a conflict _____
- Write about a time when you had to seek information to make a good decision _____
- Critique a news piece, pointing out the bias or persuasive nature of the piece _____
- Take a position on the role of the U.S. in world affairs and defend your position _____
- List a possible career option and the steps to take in achieving it _____
- Create a plan for a possible new business you could start _____
- Produce a video demonstrating how to perform 3 routine vehicle checks/repairs _____

Communications
Critical Thinking
Collaboration
Informed Decision
Making
Creativity

DISPOSITIONS



- Describe a time when you demonstrated integrity _____
- Collect a statement from a person describing how you have shown them respect _____
- Describe a situation in which you worked hard to reach success _____
- Within this school year, provide evidence of creativity _____
- Achieve your yearly individual reading goal _____
- Complete and present a dispositions extension project _____
- Produce a video that demonstrates the value of integrity _____
- Respond to the quote "Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard" _____
- Provide 2 hours of service to help our community in a beneficial way _____
- Write the story of a time when you were able to help or comfort someone in need _____
- Attain an H Accountability grade on the compact matrix for at least 3 terms _____

Creativity
Hard Work
Respect
Integrity



Duchesne County School District **ACADEMICS**



Defense of Learning

The purpose of having students present a Defense of Learning is to strengthen ownership and deepen understanding and articulation of what they've learned. In our district, we believe learning is more than just finishing assignments - it's about growing, thinking, and understanding yourself as a learner. For this reason, students will be asked to defend their learning.

This means students will reflect on what they have learned, how they have grown, and why their work matters. They will share their progress with others and explain the choices they made along the way. It's a chance to show what they know, practice their communication skills, and take pride in their hard work.

Here are the key reasons why this practice is valuable:

- 1. Promotes Metacognition and Reflection:** Students must think critically about what they learned, how they learned it, and why it matters. This helps them develop self-awareness and take responsibility for their own growth.
- 2. Strengthens Communication Skills:** Defending their learning in front of an audience (peers, teachers, or community members) builds confidence, clarity, and articulation, which are essential life and career skills.
- 3. Validates Effort and Achievement:** The defense serves as a culminating moment where students showcase their progress, celebrate success, and demonstrate competency — not just of content, but of process and perseverance.
- 4. Encourages Depth Over Compliance:** Instead of just completing tasks for a grade, students must justify their learning choices, explain challenges, and provide evidence—shifting the focus from compliance to authentic understanding.
- 5. Builds a Culture of Accountability and Pride:** When students know they'll present and defend their work, they're more likely to take it seriously. It creates a real-world audience and purpose, making learning more relevant and meaningful.



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Defense of Learning (cont.)

When students are in their last year at a particular school, they will have the opportunity to present a Defense of Learning. In the Roosevelt area this means at the end of 5th, 8th, and 12th grades. In the Altamont, Duchesne, and Tabiona areas this means at the end of 6th, 8th, and 12th grades.

In April or May each year, the district will select one day where regular school will not be held. In its place will be scheduled appointments for the families of individual students to come to the school and listen to their student present their Defense of Learning. It is like a super-charged parent/teacher conference.

Students will take time throughout the year preparing their slides for their Defense of Learning. Then, on the designated day in April or May, they will present to a panel of educators and any family and friends that would like to come and support them on this important day.

The slides students use to present will be organized in the areas of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions - with flexibility for a little "Getting to Know Me" section and/or "Future Goals" section. Students will compile artifacts created while achieving the the vital competencies throughout their time at their school. Former projects, essays, assignments, and activities will be reflected on, analyzed, and selected to demonstrate their learning and growth as a person.

In Duchesne County School District we believe in helping to develop the whole person when working with our students. The Vital Competencies, coupled with the Defense of Learning, are enhancements we utilize to help students lead fulfilling lives.



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ACADEMICS



8th Grade - Defense of Learning - Scoring Rubric

	Knowledge	Skills	Dispositions
Distinguished Level Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed all required and at least 4 optional tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Clearly explains what they have learned in multiple subjects and connects learning across subjects. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives 3 or more strong, specific examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed all required and at least 4 optional tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Effectively describes academic and life skills developed (e.g., critical thinking, collaboration, creativity) and how they use them in their life. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives 3 or more strong, specific examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed all required and at least 4 optional tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Clearly reflects on personal growth of positive dispositions such as hard work, respect, and integrity. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives 3 or more strong, specific examples.
Passing Level Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed all required tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Explains key learning in multiple subjects with a general understanding. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives 2 solid examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed all required tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Describes some skills they've developed and how they use them. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives 2 solid examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed all required tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Reflects on some positive dispositions. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives 2 solid examples.
Not Passing Level Does Not Meet Expectations Yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has not completed all required tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives vague or incomplete explanations of what they've learned. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides only one or multiple unclear examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has not completed all required tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Struggles to describe personal skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides only one or multiple unclear examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has not completed all required tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Limited/vague reflection on dispositions. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides only one or multiple unclear examples.



Duchesne County School District ACADEMICS



Defense of Learning Example Slides

Getting To Know Me



Friends

I love to hang out with my friends any time I get the chance. It makes me feel like I belong and we almost always have a lot of fun together.



Maps

I love to look at maps and to study all the different places in the world. I see the topography and wonder why major cities grew where they have. I think about the places I would like to visit some day.

KNOWLEDGE

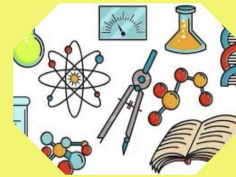
Healthy Living

I learned a great deal by comparing good eating habits vs. addictions. I see the value in properly fueling my body so I can live a healthy and happy life.



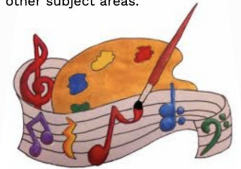
Science

The scientific method is such a great way to approach learning new things. Hypothesizing, testing, using evidence, etc. help all of us come to deeper levels of knowledge in any area.



Humanities

My music and art classes have helped me express myself in more complete ways while allowing me to connect with my inner-self in ways that are not possible in other subject areas.



SKILLS

Critical Thinking

I recently critiqued a news article and was shocked at the amount of bias and persuasive language in it. I have learned to pay attention to bias, exaggeration, lack of evidence/support when others communicate to me.

Collaboration

I won't lie, sometimes it just easier to do something yourself than to have to rely on others. However, to go far in life, I will need to work well with others. My classes have stretched me beyond my comfort zone to stretch me as a person.

Informed Decision Making

As I approach the big decision of a future career, I have learned to check out more information than you easily get on the surface. Receiving multiple sources of information is a great start, but organizing it and analyzing it are also key.

DISPOSITIONS

Integrity

I have shown integrity by doing my own work in school this year. There was a few times when I could have easily cheated on a test. I thought about it, but decided that I wanted to be an honest person.

Respect

You have to show respect to get respect. I can control the showing of respect for others, but I cannot control the respect they show me. I have decided to show respect to all people.

Hard Work

Some people think that school just comes easy for me. But the truth is that I have to work hard for it in many subjects. I believe hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.



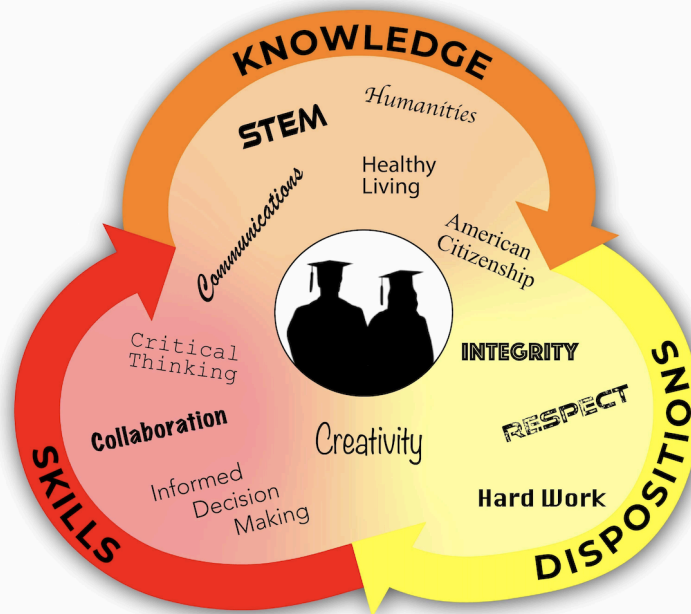
Duchesne County School District

2026-27

Goals

1. Every student achieves their individual reading goal.
2. Every student actively engages in school, from bell to bell, every day.

Graduates of
Duchesne County School District
have the . . .



. . . to lead fulfilling lives.

DCSD Supporting Goals and Action Plans (2026-27)

1. Every student achieves their individual reading goal.	
1.1 Family and staff support every student to reach their goal.	<p>1.1.1 By the end of September, each student will set their own personal reading goal. The goal is written and recorded at the school.</p> <p>1.1.2 A specific staff member is responsible to help guide the student in setting the goal and follow-up with the student throughout the year.</p> <p>1.1.3 Progress is recorded on the report card each quarter. At least 90% achieving their goal.</p>
2. Every student actively engages in school, from bell to bell, every day.	
<p>2.1 All students in each classroom are provided many opportunities to respond and participate. Goals:</p> <p>3.5 OTR Rate.</p> <p>2.0 Student Participation Rate.</p>	<p>2.1.1 District leaders support teachers in this goal by providing professional development on student engagement strategies.</p> <p>2.1.2 At least 80% of the time, teachers receive monthly feedback on engagement from school leaders or other teachers.</p> <p>2.1.3 At least 95% of the time, PLC teams use their own data to discuss best practices for providing opportunities to respond and increasing student participation rates.</p>
2.2 At least 90% of students attend school each day.	2.2.1 Implement an accountability grade for attendance along with rewards and consequences.
2.3 Decrease the number of behavioral interruptions to learning.	2.3.1 Implement the Conduct Level & Conduct Contracts systems as an accountability grade.
2.4 Increase the number of students proficient on state end-of-year assessments in grades 3-11 by 2% from the previous year in English Language Arts, Math, and Science.	2.4.1 District leaders support schools in their goals and action plans.
2.5 90% graduation rate.	2.5.1 Use the Graduation Improvement Plan in all high schools to systematically help more students graduate.

