

A black and white photograph of a graduation ceremony. In the foreground, graduates in gowns are seated in rows of folding chairs, many with their arms raised in celebration. Numerous graduation caps are captured mid-air, scattered across the upper half of the frame. The background shows a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

DADE COUNTY SCHOOLS

A BEACON OF SAFETY AND EXCELLENCE

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DADE COUNTY SCHOOLS

A BEACON OF AND EXCELLENCE

Prioritizing student safety and achievement while setting the gold standard for educational commitment in the heart of Georgia

AT A GLANCE

DADE COUNTY SCHOOLS

WHAT: A dedicated school district focusing on student safety, academic achievement, and community involvement.

WHERE: Dade County, Northwest Georgia

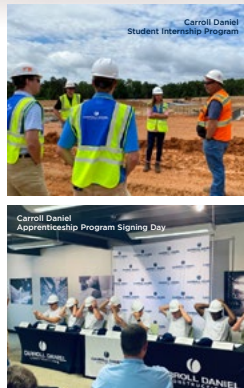
WEBSITE: www.dadecountyschools.org/

SAFETY NCE



Dade County Schools in Trenton, Georgia, exemplifies a commitment to educational excellence. The district offers a comprehensive educational experience, ensuring that every student is equipped with the tools and knowledge to thrive in the future.

The district comprises several schools, each catering to specific age groups. Davis Elementary School and Dade Elementary



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School serve the younger students, focusing on foundational learning and early development. Dade Middle School bridges the gap, preparing students for the challenges of high school. Dade County High School, the district's crown jewel, offers a robust curriculum, ensuring students are college and career-ready upon graduation.

Beyond academics, Dade County Schools emphasizes holistic development. The events calendar is bustling with activities ranging from cross-country meets to volleyball matches, highlighting the district's commitment to physical education and extracurricular engagement.

Building on a Legacy of Dedication and Excellence

Building on the foundation set by Dade County Schools, Superintendent Josh Ingle's journey with the district spans nearly two decades. From his initial role as an assistant principal at an elementary school to his current position as the Superintendent, Ingle's trajectory mirrors the district's promise to foster an environment where every student thrives.



“I feel like my longevity, my tenure here in Dade County, aligns with the core values of this board of education,” Ingle shares. Central to these values is the belief that every student, irrespective of their background, possesses the potential to learn and grow. This ethos is encapsulated in the mission of Dade County Schools, which emphasizes the roles of dedicated teachers, community and parent commitment, safe environments, and strong leadership in shaping the future of its students.

The district’s focus on early education is evident in its collaboration with state initiatives and its emphasis on inclusive programs. Ingle mentions the partnership with “Babies Can’t Wait,” a program dedicated to children with significant developmental delays. “Once they transition from ‘Babies Can’t Wait,’ we have a program for three and four-year-olds,” he explains. This program, while specialized, underscores the district’s commitment to providing tailored educational experiences for all its students.

The Pillar of Dade County

Dade County Schools isn’t just an educational institution; it’s the heartbeat of a tight-knit community. “It takes a village to raise a child,” Ingle notes, highlighting the school’s central role in the community. Located in a rural setting at the crossroads of Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia, Dade County is a unique blend of local charm and proximity to urban centers like Chattanooga.

“We are the pillar of this small community,” Ingle emphasizes, noting the school district’s position as the largest employer in the area. This intertwining of school and community is further exemplified by the number of staff members returning to serve in the district they graduated from after pursuing higher education. “Many of our staff members... see that as giving back to their community,” he adds.

The district collaborates closely with local industries, offering high school students diverse Career Technical Agricultural Education (CTE) programs, ranging from health science to welding, tailored to the local job landscape. Their partnership with the Alliance for Dade, the local Chamber of Commerce, culminates in an annual career fair. Here, students engage directly with businesses, fostering invaluable face-to-face interactions. As Ingle notes, these encounters often lead to interviews, internships, or student job opportunities.

Laying the STEM Foundation

The world of education is rapidly evolving, with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) becoming a focal point for many school districts. Dade County Schools is no exception. While many might assume that STEM initiatives are reserved for higher grade levels, Ingle reveals a different approach. “We started a partnership with NASA HUNCH,” he shares, explaining that this collaboration began at the middle school level and has since expanded upwards to the high school and downwards to the elementary schools.

STEM isn’t confined to a specific class period



at the elementary level. Instead, students have activity periods where they can engage in STEM-related tasks. “Both of our elementary schools have a STEM night throughout the year,” Ingle elaborates. These events offer students and their parents hands-on activities tailored to each grade level, fostering a love for STEM from an early age. The presence of

3D printers in both elementary schools further cements this commitment. “We expose the kids to that as early as kindergarten,” he notes.

At the middle and high school levels, there is a more intensive focus on STEM, featuring larger 3D printers and complex projects. The district’s partnership with NASA HUNCH stands out prominently. Students print objects that



are currently in use on the International Space Station, Ingle reveals. They design and produce tools ranging from tape dispensers to stabilization bars that astronauts utilize. This several-year initiative provides students with a concrete link to the expansive realm of STEM, illustrating the real-world relevance of their classroom studies.

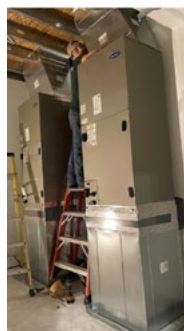
Investing in Infrastructure

Dade County Schools' pledge to provide a top-tier educational environment is evident in its strategic investments in infrastructure. "Our school board has always been wise stewards of the resources," Ingle begins. The district ensures its facilities are well-maintained and up-to-date through state-level funding and a local sales tax initiative.

"We've been fortunate to have that \$0.01 [sales tax] that the voters approve... It's called SPLOST, a special purpose local option sales tax," he explains. This funding has facilitated various projects, from a \$1.2 million HVAC project at Dade Elementary School to a \$3.5 million renovation at Dade Middle School. Looking ahead, the district plans to upgrade its lighting systems, starting with LED installations and eventually transitioning to sports lighting.

Sports and the Arts

When it comes to extracurricular activities, Dade County Schools offers an overabundance.



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“We have football, basketball, baseball, softball... online gaming, bass fishing, golf, tennis,” he lists, emphasizing the district’s dedication to providing diverse opportunities. Interestingly, online gaming falls under the Georgia High School Association, highlighting its growing significance in school sports.

But the district’s commitment to nurturing talents isn’t limited to sports. “In our arts area, we have band—marching band, concert band—we have performing arts, and then we have fine arts,” Ingle shares. The high school’s auditorium is a hub for these activities, hosting various events from band concerts to theater productions. The shared facilities and staff between the middle and high schools ensure continuity in students’ artistic journeys.

Spotlight on Achievements

Dade County Schools has consistently demonstrated an unwavering focus on academic excellence and the holistic development of its students through extracurricular activities. This dedication shines brightly when one looks at the accomplishments of the district’s sports teams and performing arts groups.

Ingle highlights the national exposure Dade County students receive, noting that during his tenure as a high school principal, students participated in the McDonald’s Thanksgiving Day parade in Chicago. He emphasizes the lasting impact of such experiences, describing the joy of observing students in unique environments and deepening their relationships.

Additionally, he mentions that the chorus group has performed at renowned places like Disney and Universal Studios. Currently, preparations are underway for the chorus to perform at Carnegie Hall in the upcoming spring, with the district actively fundraising to ensure every eligible student can seize this exceptional opportunity.

Championing Sports Excellence

Regarding sports, Dade County Schools has a rich legacy of achievements. “In 2012, our girls’ softball team clinched the state



championship,” Ingle reminisces, adding that it was also a personal milestone for him. “One of the things on my bucket list as a high school principal was to get a state championship ring. So, I was able to check that box in 2012.”

Wrestling, another sport the district excels in,

has seen students consistently placing at state tournaments. “This past year, we had one student who was a two-time state champion,” Ingle notes. While football and basketball teams have been regionally competitive, Ingle acknowledges their challenges. “Our school district is not growing... so we must work hard to maintain that



competitiveness.” Yet, with dedicated coaches and a resilient spirit, Dade County Schools continue to set high standards in sports and beyond.

Safety and Student Achievement

In the heart of Dade County, the Dade County Schools district is a shining beacon

of commitment to its students, staff, and the community. As the world evolves, so do the challenges faced by educational institutions. Yet, the school district remains unwavering in its dedication to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for all.

“Safety is paramount,” Ingle emphasizes. “It’s on my mind 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. When parents drop their kids off at school daily, they trust their children will return home safely.” This commitment to safety is evident in the district’s close collaboration with law enforcement officials and the presence of school resource officers (armed police officers) in all four schools. The district has also invested significantly in technology to bolster campus safety measures.

Ingle mentions the introduction of the CENTEGIX badge, a safety measure given to all staff members, from bus drivers to teachers. He emphasizes that this badge allows employees to call for assistance during emergencies swiftly. He also shares a humorous story where a teacher, during high-stakes testing, used the badge to ask for extra calculators. This story highlights the district’s drive to ensure staff fully use available resources, reinforcing a sense of support and empowerment.

As the calendar year draws to a close and 2024 beckons, Dade County Schools is poised to continue its legacy of excellence. “Our top goal is our students,” Ingle concludes. “Providing students opportunities and safe learning environments remains our primary objective.”

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