

Dover Teachers' Union 2020-2021 School Budget Survey

I am curious why Sped case managers for the elementary level are not included in the survey. Although the numbers reflect a student teacher ratio at WPS, it's not truly reflective of the needs of our school. Some case managers have fewer students because they're working with students with greater needs from the constellation program. Our speech path can't meet the needs of all of our students because she has to provide one on one service for some of our kids. I think it would be wise to ask case managers at each school how many students they are actually serving. When the case manager thinks a group of 12 is a small group there's something wrong.
We don't need more admininstration, more coordinators, more instructional coaches. We need more people who work with kids. THE instructional coaches have not benefitted me or my students this year, so I'd love to see more mental health and SpEd supports.
Raising the substitute wage will attract better subs... I hope!
DMS and DHS needs more help with mental health issues. More therapists and counselors that can work with the many high-needs cases. Our students need help. Not administrative positions or academic coaches.
There will be 250 more students at DHS than there were two years ago. We have not increased teaching staff at all to keep up with growing numbers. We need more teaching staff.
We do not need more coaches and deans. We need more teachers to work directly with students.
Instead of adding DHS study-hall monitors, add DHS lunchroom monitors
I see a major need is emotional support for students. Increased social workers, case managers and a lower student to teacher ration are ways that I see to address this need. Students cannot learn if their basic needs for safety (physical and emotional) are not met. If we want to make any content or curriculum progress we first need to address emotional needs.
We need to pay the current coaches that do not get paid.
1) Would the union/district be willing to discuss the possibility of paying teachers (instead of subs) to cover classes during their prep or in lieu of a duty.
I feel that our paraprofessionals are drastically underpaid. They deserve and increase both in house and substitutes.
Nothing to add at this time.
The district seems to be getting a bit top heavy with administrators and positions that do not even interact with children. We need teachers. We most certainly require additional case managers, specifically at DMS.
If the Board and the Superintendent want to help our students will all the social and emotional learning..we need at least one behavior specialist fulltime at the middle school..NOT instructional coaches!!
The information given to the school board about DHS case manager ratios was incorrect. DHS has a 1:27 case management ratio, yet the ask is for 1 additional DHS case manager, and 3 at DMS, even though the DMS ratio is 1:18. To reach the recommended case load of 1:15, DHS would need to hire 8 additional case managers.
The DMS and DHS librarians NEED support. They have the worst per pupil ratios IN THE STATE. There is so much they could do to further promote research skills and information sciences if they had some assistance.
DHS would benefit from a 504 coordinator to keep continuity across all plans
We need more individuals who work directly with students. We do not need instructional coaches.
We desperately need more people to work with students - NOT more administration or coaches!
DMS needs a behavior specialist. We do not need any additional instructional coaches. We also need more paras as we aren't in compliance in many cases.

I have heard from one than one current instructional coach that they don't know their job duties- if this is the case why are we in need of so many more? I don't understand the positions, therefore I cannot support it until I understand how they are assisting classroom teachers.
The case management numbers at the high school are outrageous! The recommended number is 1:15 and we have 1:27(ish) at this point, that's well over 10 extra students on EACH caseload.. one new case manager will only bring us down to 1:24(ish) and that's only if our numbers stop increasing, which I don't see happening. Also the high school has NO available classes for new registrations due to classes already being over capacity, this is going to be a huge concern in a few years when students have completed their 4 years of high school, but don't have enough credits due to not having classes available. I feel both of these concerns need to be addressed more specifically.
I support any positions that allow teachers to work more directly with students Technical support is unnecessary unless we are updating/increasing technology or providing "tech teachers" to work with children
Please fund Foundations for third graders. Currently we have no cohesive program to teach word study to third graders and the students are lacking the skills they need to be successful readers and writers.
Please try to find a way to lower classes in elementary school to 20 or less. Research shows 15 or less is ideal, but we'll start with 20 or less to help us reach each student's full potential.
Need to consider student mental health and hire staff to help teachers deal with that.
I would like to also add that the budget should include room for both DPA and DTU wage increases based on the agreed upon DTU contract and leaving room for DPA salary increase contingent on DPA negotiations this year.
I also would like to advocate for a behavior specialist for DMS.
More positions with direct contact with students not more administrators.
More elementary teachers (including special education) =smaller class sizes->better teacher to student ratio instruction
We do not need more admin. We need to look at class size and make that equitable across schools again.
Any new position should be either directly working with students or freeing up teachers to either teach more classes or have more planning time.
The high school desperately needs new teachers as there are not enough classes for students. The discrepancy between duties and planning between the high school and other schools continues to be an issue.
Behavior Specialist at DMS.
Although I would like to support the three Master Level Social Workers, I was deterred by the job description which stated they would work with Special Ed. students and Behavior students. I think the positions should benefit all student population, especially as Garrison is now the only school with one Counselor/Social Worker.
Surprised that this was not addressed in the budget.
Please a behaviorist at DMS
Based on student numbers and student to teacher ratios, there's NOT enough case managers proposed for the high school and too many are proposed for the middle school.
Would the addition of study hall aides for the purpose of releasing teachers for instruction add more than the max teaching blocks in effect now?
Case managers are always an area of need. We want the lowest per pupil ratio possible. Also, the Librarian at DMS works so hard. If she is going to be in the RA rotation she needs an assistant.

We need more classroom teachers and smaller class sizes - especially in K and 1. Our students’ needs (academic, social emotional, special education, home lives, etc.) have become increasingly higher each year. We cannot provide our students with what they need when class sizes are over 20. We need consistency throughout the elementary schools with class sizes so all Dover students receive an equal opportunity to a quality education. Class sizes of 14 in one school and 23 in another in the SAME grade level is not equitable.
We need lower class sizes. No more coaches. More behavioral heath support. Teacher salary increases, substitute salary increases. Good P.D. for literacy.
The need for services for students with disabilities is so high that it is imperative that we add special education teachers/ case managers when we can.
We need more teachers/staff working directly with students and not more administration.
Any additional support for para and substitute, to increase our pool, would be huge.
Additional tech (student devices)
I had a hard time choosing. All of these positions are important to our schools which is why they were put in the budget. We might not understand the importance of some positions if we are not in the building requesting them, but the administrators do. I have seen very little waste in the Dover Schools and trust our administrators to make good decisions. I am a Dover taxpayer.
I think that if we considered a wage increase, it should be for our paraprofessionals rather than the two options listed above. We are having a very difficult time hiring and retaining paraprofessionals. In addition, the dedicated paraprofessionals that we have deserve to be either paid more or the district should pay a much larger share of their medical benefits. At this time, if we have a snow day or vacation, paras do not get paid. It must be very difficult for them financially when we have a week out of school. In the summer, they can get a job because it is solid chunk of time and there are seasonal jobs available. They can't get a job for one week off in December, February and April. The district has also taken Teacher Workshop days away from them. If the district would like to have competent staff working with the students, we need to invest in providing them with the education they require to do so.
I don't believe we need anything in question 1. Special education and associated staff have increased 600% in the past 20 years, while the number of teachers have dropped.
Instructional coaches and administrative support is not what is needed! I would
More elementary teachers for smaller class sizes.
The special education department needs more staff including administrative assistant support, and resources, in regard to materials and technology.
I'm curious about why we need so many coaches? I feel like admin takes our prep time (at times) to find things for these coaches to do. We have so many kids with rage and behavior issues. How about more behavior counselors. Some of these questions were difficult to answer as I don't know what DMS or DHS need.
I feel that we need to carefully consider the needs of the district, especially when creating new positions. We need to ensure that the roles for these positions are clear and are focused. The middle school definitely needs more support. The guidance counselors are one of the most valuable resources that should be used to help students. An additional position to free their time would be IMMEASURABLE. Also, increased pay for substitutes, in my opinion, would garner a better, more fitting pool of substitutes that interact with our students.
At this point, high school case manager Each have a caseload of 27+ students (in addition to instructing their classes). There are more students being added, at a rapid pace. We don’t have the staffing or resources to provide adequate services.
Technology! It is lacking and it poorly effects students standardized tests scores (which they have to take on computers that are unreliable and we don't have enough of) and then teachers get blamed for poor test scores by the city, even though the severe technological defecit severely harms our ability to prepare them well.
At DMS, we need department heads, not more coaches.

Another art position
The Superintendent’s proposal for additional “coaches” at DMS is ridiculous. My experience with them has been useless and I am disappointed to hear that the idea of additional money being spent for this purpose is even being considered by the SAU. The role (and salary) is not justified for one, never mind three. We need direct support for our kids to mitigate many of the challenges we face, not theory.
I feel there is a need for a behavioral specialist at DMS. Oasis does not cover all of the kids who need extra support. With the push for social emotional learning it would make sense to have a behavior specialist. I am not sure why there are other items that are less of a priority in the budget and that does not seem to be addressed. Also, I do not understand the need for more administration at the middle school level. I think we need more tools and materials and not more people telling us how to do things. It seems like the money is misplaced. Too many classrooms lacking curriculums and lots of other areas of need before this. Most of us are capable of doing our jobs and implementing new things on our own. There are so many other things to address before this should even be brought up. It makes it feel like we need more people to tell us what to do when the focus should be on giving us what we need to do our jobs. It also makes it feel like there is a disconnect between what teachers feel we need and what those above think is best for us without seeing what is going on everyday. I think instructional coaches and more admin could serve a purpose a ways down the line but only after the numerous other things our school lacks is addressed. I am also afraid that asking for big things like these positions runs the risk of losing support for the other things we really need in the budget.
District is suffering from lack of speech/language staff/services, and overall special education needs more support. DMS NEEDS ASD PROGRAM SUPPORT. District is in dire need of counseling SERVICES, psychologists should be running groups and working with students.
I support any position that directly either works with students directly or lightens the load currently placed on teachers. Teachers have too much currently on their plates(current curriculum, competencies, additional resources such as Raz Kids, SEL instruction). Although all of the resources that instructional coaches are providing are fantastic, realistically I do not have time to look at all of them or implement them. At this point I feel instructional coach positions are just adding to the work load for teachers (not because of the individuals in those positions, they are great, but the nature of the position itself.). If instructional coaches would actually provide direct services to students on a consistent basis that would be helping teachers (manage Raz kids resource for classes, meet with students directly for reading/writing support or enrichment, provide math support for struggling students) then perhaps I would support these additional positions.
I do not agree with many of these new positions. If anything we need positions that provide direct services to children.

Due to the increase of students we need more regular education teacher at the high school. Classes are full to the point that students are enrolled in 2 + study halls/ semester. This has a ripple effect and makes it difficult for students (especially struggling students) as it severely limits the choices students have, which means they not be placed in the proper level classes which increases the need for additional support staff. Not having enough classroom teachers means that support staff is overwhelmed and has to essentially tutor all 26-30 students on our case load in subjects that we are not experts in; however, I want to be clear this is not the fault of the classroom teacher. When you have almost 30 students in a class it is impossible to give support needed to the struggling student. The lack of classes and teachers also overwhelms the special education classes. Since students are not able to get the support that they need in the regular education classes and there is no space they are being placed in special education classes, even if they could be successful in a regular ed class with some additional support. I have students who have taken the same classes 3 times because there is not other option for them. This means that case managers are responsible for servicing almost 30 students and teaching (prepping, grading, making materials) classes. I teach 3 different subjects which all require different preps and grading as well as service and maintaining paperwork for 28 students on my case load. The needs of my students have increased dramatically (due to being in large and overwhelmed classes) and there is not enough time to give them the support they need. I stay late almost everyday, but I can only help students when they are in school and since I , and all of my colleagues, are being stretched so thin that we are not able to give our students the help they need. The double whammy is that because the classes are so large they are not able to get the additional support from their classroom teachers. Since we are having more and more students come up I expect this problem will get worse and we will be stretched thinner and thinner until we are totally out of non-compliance, which I fear is closer than we would like to admit. While this is true for me, a case manager, it is also true for our support SLP and School psychologist who are so far above state recommendations that they do not have time to sit down. Again, this is impacting the most vulnerable of our students.

Another MAJOR issue is the lack of paras. Paras are being abused and expected to show up for a ridiculously low amount of pay. It is no surprise that we are not able to keep them. Because they are not enticed to stay (which who can blame them) the students with IEPs in general education classes suffer. Again, the classroom teacher can not possibly be expected to sit one-one with one student when they have a class of 25-30 and if there is no para to give additional support (reading texts, scribing, helping take notes, working with them in a smaller setting) then the responsibility falls on the case manager, who is already classroom teaching, doing paperwork(which takes a significant amount of time) for 28 students, and servicing students. The lack of paras adds fuel to the fire and stretching us too thin and again rapidly pushing us towards non-compliance and setting students with specific learning disabilities, language processing disabilities, and emotional and behavioral disabilities for failure. Of course these students want to do well, but do to the nature of their disabilities need support. Of course the goal is independence, but to go from support in lower grades to basically no support at the high school level is unfair to the students.

We don't need more administration. We need people to work with students.

Budgeting to train paras and subs properly. This includes student needs, protocols, laws, drills, etc.

Teachers need as much support as possible!

The Student Services Department at the high school has a horrible student/teacher ratio. We have students in identified classes with 20+ students in them. The case managers have almost 30 students per caseload. The para's are getting abused by students and are being told that they should not document student aggression. There is a para with injuries that require her to attend physical therapy. We need support. The Dean of Student Services at DHS does nothing to support the department.

We don't need anything in #1. None of those impact student learning.

Subs certainly need better pay. I think we need to figure out what is critical at each site and work on those. I don't know if money needs to be spent at the district level if district is pushing teachers to do most of the work. Our sped case managers have so much work they work all weekend as well as during the school day. I think we have so many employees on the brink of leaving the profession because they don't feel supported, student behavior is outrageous and there is too much asked of us...we would like to actually teach.

We need more substitutes across the district. We need to give them a competitive wage.

We need to address the mental health needs of students in a more holistic manner. We need multiple programs to be able to service more students and support to general education teachers. A trauma sensitive program approach for our most at risk students should be discussed.

I think it is ridiculous the amount of money proposed for admin positions when we have high class sizes and and our special ed department is overwhelmed by the sheer number of students that need support.

I strongly feel that no new administration position are needed at this time. The survey did not allow for an option to say needed or not needed. The main support of the DTU should be the teachers and what they need for their students for direct instruction.
DHS - SLP-A new position at least .5
As the district moves towards competency based grading and instruction at all levels of education, the district will need to have key figures instructing the education of its teaching staff to feel themselves competent in this new endeavor.
#should t have to do Sophie s Choice on #4.
We need more nurses in the district. We need to increase nurse sub pay. A resident sub RN would be great to have contracted for X amt of hours Thank you
I think the budget priorities should be fully funding the teacher's contract, funding a pay increase for paraprofessionals, and reducing class size by adding additional classroom teachers. Those items should be addressed and funded before any additional positions are added. They need to work on building a more solid foundation before adding to it.
Only knowing the needs of my own school made it hard to understand and prioritize the options given above.
Coaches need to be paid similar to coaches at other schools. Most Dover coaches are paid half of what other coaches in the state receive. It is difficult to hire and retain quality coaches with the discrepancy in pay.
The Dover High School is seeing an increase in students every year and resources are running out. By adding more teachers to open up more class options will help the staff and students be more successful. Many students have multiple study halls to fill their schedule because all classes are at capacity and these students are missing out on credits along with courses needed for graduation. Also, the Special Education department needs more support to be able to support the many students with special education needs. The case managers are at almost double what the recommended case load is, averaging about 26-28 students per case load. Also, the need for more paraprofessionals is the great. They an important part of the special education department, and they are needed so we are able to successfully support all students in the school, in general education and inclusion classrooms. It is crucial that these students needs are met and they are getting the help they need to be successful.
Reduce science class sizes at DHS. There will be a grievance in SY 20-21 based on current conditions!