

# Education

## Goal and Work Plan Priorities

### Goal Statement

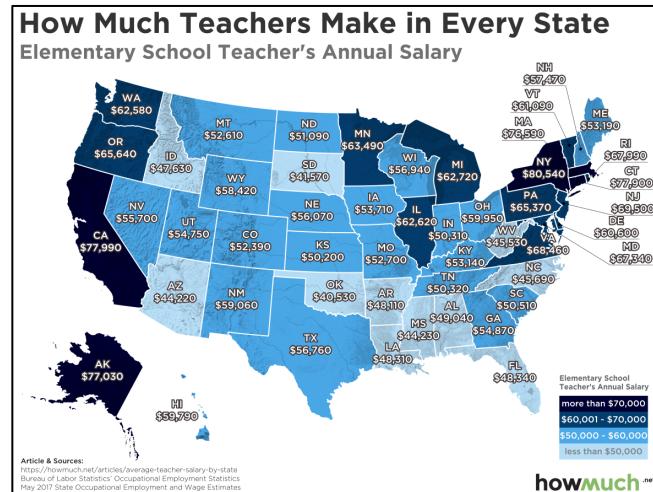
Support our local public schools, vocational center, and college to continue to increase academic achievement that helps establish Duncan as a place where it is known that residents can engage in high quality learning opportunities, that are accessible and affordable, throughout their entire lifetime.

### Work Plan Priorities

#### General Education Priorities

##### **Ensure teacher pay is competitive with other districts and states**

To ensure the future of an educated population that can drive future economic growth in the community, Duncan needs to work to see that our local teachers are receiving a competitive wage within the region as well as compared to neighboring states. The education system is critical for the future of a community, and Duncan Public Schools has done a fantastic job of advocating for their teachers and employees, providing the resources necessary to educate our children and youth, and providing the tools necessary to allow the children to become future leaders in the community. To assist in ensuring that competitive wages are provided, the community needs to continue to stand with Duncan Public Schools and advocate on their behalf.



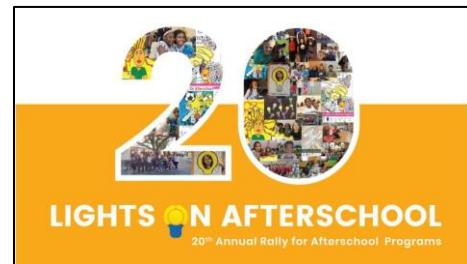
##### **Elevate state support for public schools in Oklahoma**

As a community, Duncan has shown strong support for Duncan Public Schools with the establishment of the Duncan Public Schools Foundation in 1989. The program allows for contributions to be made from the community directly to school programs and to our local teachers, enabling them to better perform in educating the children and youth of the community. However, there may be times when our community needs to advocate further and become more involved in showing support by attending school board meetings, getting involved on a personal level with parent/teacher programming, and writing state officials. By being active locally and illustrating to our state officials the importance Duncan Public Schools has on our local community and economic opportunity, Duncan can help ensure that there is constant state support for the public schools in Oklahoma.



### Develop and promote afterschool activities and programs

Afterschool activities not only ensure that the children of the community have a safe place to go after school while parents are still working, but also provides an opportunity for the young minds to explore interests, develop new skills, build social skills, boost self-esteem and mental health, and enhance their academic performance. An obstacle to providing more after-school activities is to find appropriate funding streams that can support the staff and activities that might occur. Many of the educators in Duncan have indicated that they would like to be able to do more with afterschool programming and activities, but the funding is just not available. There are a few non-profit organizations that are trying to fill this gap in the community, but citizens and educators have both indicated that more can be done if funding were available.



### Develop and promote Family Night Opportunities that engage parents, children and educators

Education goes beyond the time spent in classrooms, and having parents involved with their children's education experiences is extremely important. By providing Family Night opportunities at schools, parents are encouraged to engage with their child, the teachers and school staff, and begin building the importance of community. Such activities might include family dances, concert nights in which the school's band and choir perform, art nights where students and parents create together, and family literacy night in which families read, write and share ideas together. The positive experiences will enhance the learning environment for the children, build stronger family ties, and grow civic engagement for generations to come.



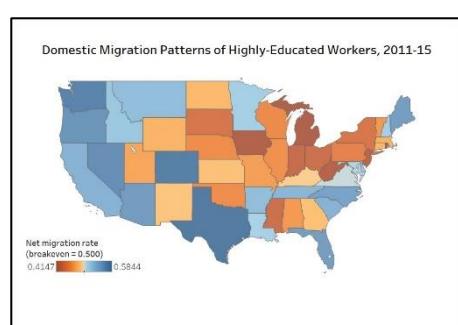
### Promote community programs that focus on developing soft and life skills training

The education system does a great job in developing skills for those entering and involved in the local workforce, and these efforts should always be applauded. However, there is a growing gap in the development of soft and life skills for students entering adulthood and programs should be developed to apply general knowledge to life (adaptability, emotional intelligence, patience, accountability, etc.) and life (nutritional cooking, automotive maintenance, home/structure maintenance, personal budgets, etc.) that will be required through adulthood to maximize personal success. These types of programs, historically, were taught in schools but because of required programming changes these skills do not receive as much attention as they should. To help fill this gap, afterschool programs and opportunities through mentorship can begin to reintroduce these skills to young adults.



### Minimize the migration of skilled and educated citizens

Migration of the skilled workforce, also known as the "brain drain" is the movement of skilled residents and future adults that have obtained specialized training and education leave the community for another place for employment. Often this occurs because of a stagnant local economy, labor shortages, and lack of amenities and entertainment opportunities. Historically, Duncan has witnessed with the oil and gas industry, and needs to be aware that this can occur again so it



is imperative that the community works together to ensure that there are ample opportunities for community and economic growth, be proactive in driving new economic opportunities to the area, and ensuring that a mix of adequate housing opportunities exist, and there are multiple types of recreational activities to enjoy.

### **Primary and Secondary Education Priorities**

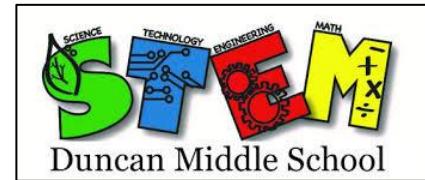
#### **Continue to promote the High School Internship Program throughout the community**

In 2016, the State of Oklahoma passed a bill allowing high school students an opportunity to receive an elective credit for an internship. In 2017, DAEDF and Duncan Public Schools worked with local employers to launch Duncan Public Schools' Pathways to Future Careers Internship Program. Since, the program has grown to include more local businesses opening their doors to high school students wishing to learn about various fields, learning business and personal skills, and allowing for an opportunity to aid in a student's decisions for choosing a future career. The program has benefited many students that call Duncan home, and the program needs to continue receiving community support to allow further growth and success.



#### **Continue to grow STEM programs and opportunities in the Middle and High Schools**

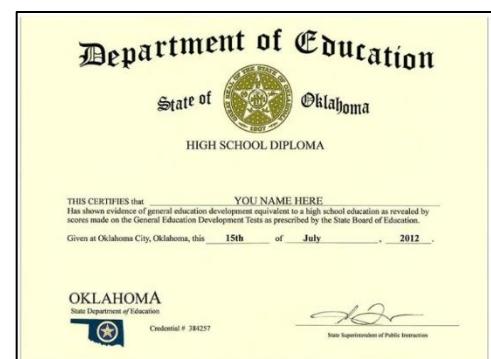
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education is a hands-on learning method that helps students apply classroom content to develop problem solving skills, solve real world problems, and see how math and science is applied in the real world. Duncan Public Schools currently provides STEM opportunities to middle and high school students with some introduction in the elementary education system. The Duncan Public Schools Foundation, serving as a non-profit, helps fund STEM education and provides additional resources to the classrooms to enrich the professional development and opportunities for both students and teachers. With advancements in technology, and the global economy becoming more important, STEM programs need to continue to provide access to future job growth and opportunities for Duncan's young adults.



#### **Continue to provide resources to assist those seeking their G.E.D.**

There are many residents of Duncan that do not currently hold a traditional high school diploma, and whether that is a result of not being able to complete high school or coming from a different background in which educational opportunities were not available, being able to obtain a G.E.D. is extremely important to gain employment.

Thankfully, Duncan has several organizations that provide resources and opportunities to those seeking to illustrate that they have the same level of academic knowledge as a traditional high school graduate that will open future doors to financial stability and prosperity. Continued support for these organizations is needed, and as the community works together to see that opportunities exist, Duncan can be known for educational opportunities for all.



## **Higher Education and Continuing Education Priorities**

### **Continue to grow and promote the Red River Career Expo**

Each year, Cameron University hosts a career expo in which a wide range of companies, including Fortune 500 corporations, local businesses, non-profit agencies, and government entities are represented. Students have an opportunity to engage representatives and discuss career paths, job requirements, and application processes for perspective employment. The ability for students, and local citizens, to connect with area businesses and organizations is important as it allows for internal community and economic growth to occur through the local education system.



### **Continue to work with employers in building curriculums and continuing education opportunities at Red River Technology Center**

The Red River Technology Center is a valuable resource to the City of Duncan and Stephens County when it comes to opening new opportunities for businesses to thrive. The Center often works with local businesses and industrial leaders in developing short-term programs and curriculums that will aid in developing the skills necessary for both the individual, and the company, to be successful in the global market. Continuation of this program and partnership will need to continue, and grow, for Duncan to diversify its local economy and prove to the world that the community is a global competitor and partner.



### **Continue to grow and promote concurrent education opportunities through Cameron University**

Concurrent enrollment allows qualified juniors and senior high school students the ability to earn college credits from Cameron University while completing high school. This opportunity provides students seeking a traditional college degree a head starts in obtaining the necessary college credit hours, ability to complete core classes, and gradually adjust to college coursework. This great program has grown over the years with Duncan Public Schools, and recently an announcement was made that qualified sophomore high school students will be able to begin taking concurrent courses with Cameron University. This type of program not only gives students a head start with college coursework, but also provides an opportunity for students to determine what fields they wish to explore for future careers.



### **Continue promoting the Murray State College School of Nursing located in Duncan**

Murray State College and Duncan Regional Hospital partnered together to bring top nursing program students to the Duncan area. The partnership will help provide greater opportunities for qualified students to earn their nursing degrees from Murray State. The partnership also allows Duncan Regional Hospital an opportunity to provide additional nursing education opportunities and increased access to local communities in which DRH serves. As the medical fields are some of the



fastest growing “industries” it is important to ensure that there are career paths and opportunities for those seeking to enter the medical fields.

## **Mentoring and Coaching Priorities**

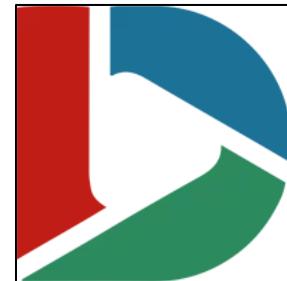
### **Promote and grow the Leadership Duncan Program**

Leadership Duncan is a community leadership program that is run by the Duncan Chamber of Commerce with a mission to identify and grow new community leaders through a series of “courses” that provide information about the Duncan community, non-profit organizations, community and economic development, and community engagement. Each year, approximately 24 to 28 community members that are identified by past class members and local employers are selected to participate in Leadership Duncan. Not only do students of these classes learn about the community, but they also benefit and gain skills in mentoring, coaching, and develop skills to be a better community leader. Programs like Leadership Duncan are extremely important to the future of the community and continued support should be provided.



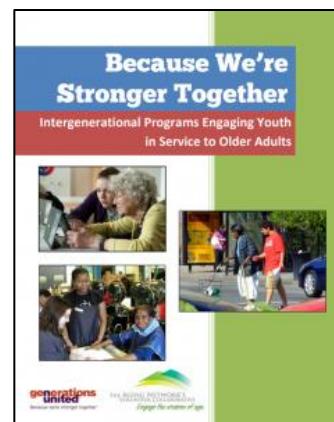
### **Promote and grow the Chamber's Young Professional Program**

Late 2024, the Chamber of Commerce kicked off their FORGE Duncan Young Professionals program. The program allows young professionals an opportunity to network, develop leadership skills, access career development opportunities, and build professional connections through Duncan's Chamber of Commerce. The ability to learn from peers and participate in social events with individuals in similar stages of their careers will help ensure future economic and community success and allow for future entrepreneurs an opportunity to chase their dreams and visions in the community.



### **Develop intergenerational relationship opportunities for seniors, young adults, and children**

Intergenerational relationship opportunities are activities that encourage interaction and cooperation between people of different generations and age groups. The activities can help seniors combat isolation, build relationships with seniors and young people, reduce stereotypes and perceptions that groups might have toward each other, and foster growth that will help improve the community. These opportunities also can educate each other about different ethnicities and cultures that should be embraced before they are forgotten. Continued partnerships with Duncan Public Schools, senior centers, and nursing homes can begin fostering the development of intergenerational relationship opportunities and when feasible investment of time and programming should be encouraged.



### Develop a Fifth Grader goes to Work Program

Citizens engaging in the quality-of-life planning process indicated that they would like to see a “Fifth Grader goes to Work” program being established. This is an educational initiative where fifth-grade students visit local workplaces, or professionals are welcomed into the classroom for the day, to observe different career paths, learn about the roles and duties of various jobs, and gain insight into the work world. The program may also offer hands-on activities, skill development, and promote engagement and interest in career opportunities. This would require the further development of Duncan Public Schools with local businesses to be successful.



### Work Plan Priorities Matrixes

General Education Priorities	Start	Timeframe	Key Stakeholders
Ensure teacher pay is competitive with other districts and states	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Public Schools, State of Oklahoma
Elevate state support for public schools in Oklahoma	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Public Schools, Community Development, State of Oklahoma
Develop and promote afterschool activities and programs	2025	Mid-Range	Duncan Public Schools, Gabriel's House, Second Chance Inc, Simmons Center, Community Development
Develop and promote Family Night Opportunities that engage parents, children and educators	2025	Mid-Range	Duncan Public Schools, Community Development
Promote community programs that focus on developing soft and life skills training	2025	Mid-Range	OSU Extension Office, Duncan Senior Center, Douglass Community Center, Community Development
Minimize the migration of skilled and educated citizens	2025	Long-Range	Community Development, City Council

Primary and Secondary Education Priorities	Start	Timeframe	Key Stakeholders
Continue to promote the High School Internship Program throughout the community	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Public Schools, DAEDF, Community Development
Continue to grow STEM programs and opportunities in the Middle and High Schools	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Public Schools, Red River Technology Center, Cameron University
Continue to provide resources to assist those seeking their G.E.D.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Area Literacy Council, Duncan Public Schools

<b>Higher Education and Continuing Education Priorities</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Key Stakeholders</b>
Continue to grow and promote the Red River Career Expo	Ongoing	Ongoing	Cameron University, Red River Technology Center, DAEDF, Community Development
Continue to work with employers in building curriculums and continuing education opportunities at Red River Technology Center	Ongoing	Ongoing	Red River Technology Center, DAEDF, Community Development
Continue to grow and promote concurrent education opportunities through Cameron University	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Public Schools, Cameron University
Continue promoting the Murray State College School of Nursing located in Duncan	Ongoing	Ongoing	Duncan Public Schools, Duncan Regional Hospital, Murray State College

<b>Mentoring and Coaching Priorities</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Key Stakeholders</b>
Promote and grow the Leadership Duncan Program	Ongoing	Ongoing	Chamber of Commerce, Community Development
Promote and grow Chamber's Young Professional Program	Ongoing	Ongoing	Chamber of Commerce, Community Development
Develop intergenerational relationship opportunities for seniors, young adults, and children	2025	Long-Range	Duncan Public Schools, Gabriel's House, Second Chance Inc, Duncan Senior Center, Douglass Community Center, Community Development
Develop a Fifth Grader goes to Work Program	2026	Long-Range	Duncan Public Schools, Community Development

