



MSD of  
**DECATUR**  
TOWNSHIP



# CULTURE GUIDE

**DECATUR**  
*Proud*



# RATIONALE FOR THE CULTURE GUIDE

Our Culture is the heart and soul of our School District. Our Vision is to **“Prepare Students to be Tomorrow Ready.”** We do that through our Mission Pillars of **Learning, Safety, and Customer Service.** Our Culture makes MSD of Decatur Township a special place to learn, work, and grow. We take pride in our past, where we stand today, and our plans for the future. Building and sustaining Decatur Township Schools’ culture requires intentional effort from everyone in the organization. Our Culture Guide is part of that effort.

*Prepare Students to be Tomorrow Ready.*

## MISSION PILLARS





## WHAT IS CULTURE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Culture is not a document that hangs on a wall. Culture is what we believe, how we behave, and the experience our behavior produces for others. It is the foundation on which our educational community is built. Written statements help clarify culture, but documents don't build culture – our ACTIONS do!

Our core values provide the standards for how we behave toward each other, our students, and our community. Because our culture shapes behavior, it determines how effectively we execute our strategy. Culture eats strategy for lunch. Our success depends on the ability to collaborate and execute in a constantly changing environment. Culture aligns everyone in the district around a set of common values and behaviors that ultimately determine how we prepare our students for success.

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## 20 SQUARE FEET

Twenty square feet is simply a metaphor that expresses each person in the district has a sphere of influence. It expresses the reality of the way we behave personally – the way each of us manages our 20 square feet – is what determines our culture.

**School culture & Strategy**

**Classroom Culture & Strategy**

**Your 20 Square Feet of Belief & Behavior**

## BELIEF ► BEHAVIOR ► OUTCOMES



Otherwise known as the “BBO,” it is a blueprint for our culture. The blueprint makes clear the specific behaviors and results we want from each of our values. The behaviors outlined in the BBO are essential to how we engage students in the classroom and how we operate our schools. Our goal is to create an educational environment where everyone consistently engages in **behaviors** that produce exceptional **outcomes**.



# EQUITY

We have an opportunity to make a difference; an opportunity to shape the future of the students in our care. This requires hard work and the willingness to **help all students to be the best version of themselves.**

## 1

### Meet the Needs of All

We create an environment for all students to learn. We personalize learning for each student. We resist the temptation of “one size fits all, cookie-cutter approach” to teaching. All students can learn and grow.

## 2

### Remove All Barriers

We look for ways to reach all children, even when it is difficult. Knowing all students can learn, we look for every possible way to make student success possible. Collectively, we will work to open all opportunities for student learning.

## 3

### Provide Differentiated Support

We strive to push students at their pace of productive discomfort to become the best version of themselves. This puts the focus of managing our 20 square feet for students to receive the supports they need and deserve.

## 4

### Be Courageous

This is about acting with integrity. We follow through with our commitments. We understand that trust is earned through behavior; not granted by a position. Standing up and owning your actions is critical for us to help all students thrive and grow.

# EVERYONE IS VALUED!

BELIEF	BEHAVIOR	OUTCOME
<b>Equity</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the needs of all</li> <li>• Remove all barriers</li> <li>• Provide differentiated support</li> <li>• Be courageous</li> </ul>	<b>Everyone is Valued!</b>
<b>Teamwork</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationships to foster a safe and productive learning environment</li> <li>• Communicate and partner with community</li> <li>• Value each other</li> <li>• Take responsibility for your actions</li> </ul>	<b>Stronger Together!</b>
<b>Excellence</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace all opportunities</li> <li>• Bring positive energy</li> <li>• Grow through productive discomfort</li> <li>• Be elite – be the best version of you</li> </ul>	<b>Do the Work!</b>

# TEAMWORK

Working smarter, not harder is a result of all being on one team by supporting each other's work. Striving for an elite culture is the result of aligning our work for one common purpose.

## 1 Build Relationships to Foster a Safe and Productive Learning Environment

We strive for all adults to form relationships so all students have mentors they can look up to for support. Having adults "in your corner" helps strengthen the feeling of support and safety in our schools.

## 2 Communicate and Partner with Community

"It takes an entire village to raise a child." Striving to cultivate ways to use all school and community partnerships for student success is critical for our students to achieve their very best. When we communicate, we share ideas and perspectives and make better decisions.

## 3 Value Each Other

Our culture is better when we work together and put the team first. No personal agendas. We ask for help, and we give help. We support each other and invest in the growth and success of our colleagues and students. Our schools are better when we work together.

## 4 Take Responsibilities for Your Actions

Be intentional in your decisions and actions. We take personal ownership for how we contribute to our school community. We do NOT waste time blaming, complaining, or defending. Instead, we invest the time to find solutions.

# STRONGER TOGETHER!

# EXCELLENCE

We strive to be an elite system for children; using daily, incremental change for the improvement of everyone in our school community. Achieving excellence means **using intentional behaviors that push us towards consistent productive results.**

## 1 Embrace All Opportunities

We must embrace all events as they come our way while managing our responses for the best outcomes we want for our children. Every event is an opportunity to get better.

## 2 Bring Positive Energy

We use every day to bring positive energy to those around us, knowing it helps elevate their behavior and the results that we strive to achieve. Energy allows us to perform, helping others help themselves; thus, creating a culture of excellence.

## 3 Growth through Productive Discomfort

In order to continually build skill, we understand that we need to challenge our abilities by working at "the edge" of what we can handle. Operating in productive discomfort challenges us to get better and become a contributing member of a winning culture.

## 4 Be Elite – Be the Best Version of You

Our goal is to be "better today than we were yesterday; better tomorrow than we are today." We strive to improve each day to help prepare our students to be **Tomorrow Ready!** Learning from mistakes allows us to create productive feedback to get better and grow. To be elite, we must build the skill to create the mindset that we can achieve anything.

# DO THE WORK!



# WORKING TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOU

$$E + R = O$$

Event + Response = Outcome

This simple equation or framework allows you to be intentional about the way you think, make decisions and act. The key to producing outcomes is not the events or circumstances you encounter, but how you choose to respond. With this equation:

- You cannot control your events (E).
- You are in complete control of your response (R). Learning to manage your R is critical.
- You earn outcomes (O) by the quality of your Response.

E+R=O is the cause-and-effect nature of the world in which you live. Your job is to get good at it. Consistently managing your response (R) will, over time, result in better outcomes for you and those around you. Developing your R factor will help you become the best version of you.

# THE R FACTOR IN E + R = O

(Event + Response = Outcome)

1 Press Pause ▶

Before you respond, slow down and give yourself time to think. Focus on understanding the situation and what you are trying to accomplish. Get off autopilot!

2 Get your Mind Right ▶

Pay attention to your inner voice. Get into a productive mindset by taking ownership of what you focus on and the story you tell yourself.

3 Step Up ▶

Engage in the best possible Response given the Outcome you want and the situation you are in. When circumstances call for it, elevate your Response. (Response is most important when the Event is most difficult.)

4 Adapt and Adjust ▶

Get good at change. Life requires you to make changes whether you are ready or not. Success goes to those who are adaptable.

5 Make a Difference ▶

Your R is an E for others!! What you do has a profound impact on the people around you. Create great experiences for others with intention.

6 Build Skill ▶

Be intentional about the habits you develop. Your behavior patterns have you on a path. Develop the habits and skills that will take you where you want to go.