



GREENCASTLE-ANTRIM SCHOOL DISTRICT E.O.E.

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"To create and provide opportunities for
all students to become lifelong learners
and productive citizens"

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SCHOOL AND HOW DO WE PROVE IT?

According to a yearly survey by Phi Delta Kappan, public schools as a whole are not thought to be successful by the general public. However, everyone's local school is considered to be "good", usually receiving an overall "A" or "B." It is an amazing phenomenon if you think about it, and truly impossible.

In past years, different groups have posted websites listing "great schools," based on what *they* believe to be important. Some base it on spending per pupil, others on the amount of Advance Placement (AP) courses offered, and others on the number of students going on to further their education. In most cases to determine which schools are great and which ones are not, states including Pennsylvania, use their states assessment scores. In our case those would be our PSSA scores.

The question then becomes "what are the true indicators of success that can determine if a school is good or great or not?" The essential question for us is "what is educationally important for the students of the Greencastle-Antrim community?" There are many facets of a public school district, certainly quality education is a foundational component. School safety, transportation, health services, guidance counseling, athletics, fiscal responsibility, and extra curricular activities are other aspects of public education. Our mission in the Greencastle-Antrim School District is to create and provide opportunities for all students to become productive citizens and life long learners. In an effort to monitor that mission, we need to measure how we are doing as an educational community. We need to determine what makes us successful and we need to be able to periodically measure that success.

Before determining what those indicators of success should be for the Greencastle-Antrim School District, we must first decide on what our underlying philosophy is. Do we want to be "competitive" with all the other schools in the county, intermediate unit, state, country, or are we just concerned with continual improvement of our own schools? You may think that both philosophies are tied together, and in essence, they are. However, we could be "improving" every year in all indicators, which would make us quite successful by that standard, but not "competing" well against other schools.

Ultimately, the Board of School Directors are responsible for determining what indicators of success we will use and what will constitute as "passing" on each of these indicators to determine the success of the Greencastle-Antrim School District. To assist them in this process, we are providing a process for the entire community (parents, guardians, students, community members, educators) to help determine the specific indicators of success for our school district

After all, the Greencastle-Antrim Schools are our schools even though we are being saturated with more directives from the state and the federal government. Though dwindling every year, we still are afforded "local control." If the schools are doing what the Greencastle-Antrim community wants them to do, then aren't we being successful? Aren't we, then in fact, a good or great school, by *our* definition?

Over the next three months, we will set out to define what will make Greencastle-Antrim a great school district and we want everyone's input. You may submit your suggestions via our website by going to www.greencastle.k12.pa.us, clicking on Great Schools under the Alerts section sending in your thoughts. You may also click on the following link directly from this document <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GASDGreatSchools>

Along with your suggestions of an indicator of success, please also add possible ways in which your suggestion can be measured. For instance, people may think that providing a "safe" environment is one of the indicators of success. But what measurement determines if we have a "safe" environment or not?

You may also submit your thoughts by mailing your suggestions to:
Great Schools Survey
Greencastle-Antrim School District
500 E. Leitersburg St.
Greencastle, PA 17225

Deadline for the initial stage is September 30, 2012.

Following those submissions, all suggestions will be categorized and then placed in survey form. From the input received from the survey, the top suggestions will be presented to the board. The board will use the information provided by the community to determine the Indicators of Success for the Greencastle-Antrim School District.

In September of each year, the administration will present to the board and the community the results of the previous school year as they pertain to the indicators of success. Further, the district administrative team will develop, if necessary, an improvement plan for areas in which the indicators fall below the "passing" mark.

Your participation is optional but this process will provide you with an opportunity to help shape the direction of the Greencastle-Antrim School District.