

## **Douglas County School District Board of Education Legislative Priorities**

These priorities guide the interactions between the Douglas County School District and the Colorado General Assembly. It incorporates the Mission, Values and Ends statements (goals) for our district as adopted by the DCSD Board of Education. Unaddressed legislative issues that arise or issues that require additional interpretation shall involve the Board of Education determining what, if any, position DCSD will take on such issues. Pursuant to DCSD Policy Governance 1.2.4, the Board has direct responsibility to create a favorable legislative impact for our students.

### **Honoring Colorado's Local Governance**

DCSD recognizes that, under the Colorado Constitution, the control of public school systems is to be governed by locally elected boards of education, and not legislated at the state or federal level. Local school boards are elected by their communities to perform the essential functions of the local board of education's constitutional and statutory authority. These functions include, but are not limited to, establishing the course of curriculum and instruction, the process for determining the terms and conditions of employment for school district employees, the budget to be used to implement the local community's priorities, and the exclusive authorization authority of charter schools within our District.

Our priorities, outlined below, are aligned to this core tenant of local governance. DCSD area legislators are urged to contact district leadership prior to proposing or supporting significant changes to state law concerning PK-12.

### **Academic Excellence**

- A. DCSD recognizes the Colorado State Board of Education's legislative mandate to adopt standards that identify the knowledge and skills that students should acquire as the student progresses from preschool through elementary and secondary education. DCSD has adopted these Colorado Academic Standards as minimum academic expectations for our students. We also support maintaining our District's authority to determine how we will provide opportunities for our students to meet these standards.

- B. DCSD supports equitable access to all public schools where each student has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills that promotes performance at his/her highest individual potential.
- C. DCSD supports an overall reduction of federal and state mandated student assessments. Reducing time required for student assessments assures our local Board flexibility to allocate instructional time and data-driven improvements to instruction and curriculum.
- D. DCSD supports a fair balance of measuring growth and achievement when assessments are mandated and/or utilized for school accountability measurements.
- E. DCSD supports a system of accountability that stresses local measures that inform instruction and separately acknowledges a need for a statewide system that allows measurement of school and district effectiveness and comparison between school districts.
- F. DCSD recognizes local school boards must have sufficient flexibility to approve, continue or discontinue all local public school choice options to ensure excellent academic opportunities for the benefit of all students in the school district.
- G. DCSD recognizes that control of instruction, including efforts to restructure and fund public education, must be guided by student needs, improved academic growth and achievement, with responsible use of financial resources as determined by the locally elected school board.
- H. DCSD recognizes that existing assessment mandates that are not benefitting our students, or that have a larger cost than benefit to our students must be rescinded so local boards may dedicate those financial resources to better use.
- I. DCSD believes that it is imperative for the State to adopt an official definition of dyslexia as defined by the National Institute of Health in agreement with the International Dyslexia Association. We support early screening, professional development for educators, and additional funding to support the needs of these students.

- J. DCSD supports providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for Special Education and Gifted and Talented Learners, and additional funding to support the needs of these students.

### **Outstanding Educators and Staff**

- A. DCSD opposes state mandates beyond the federal minimums with respect to educator licensure and accountability to assure local boards' flexibility to place the best teacher in every classroom.
- B. DCSD supports the state providing financial resources to programs such as educator preparation programs, educator recruitment and retention programs, student loan assistance programs, and other creative, financially supported solutions such as, but not limited to, collaboration with Colorado public universities, in order to reduce and eventually eliminate current and future educator shortages.
- C. DCSD supports State and Federal legislation providing public schools with adequate and reliable funding that ensures a predictable compensation schedule for all employee groups that acknowledges experience/longevity, knowledge, and performance (e.g. skills, professional growth, responsibilities, and collaboration).
- D. DCSD opposes legislative initiatives and mandates that prevent the ability to compensate employees according to research-based practices.

### **Safe, Positive Culture and Climate**

- A. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts developed and approved by school safety experts and law enforcement officials, to reduce gun violence in our schools and school communities.
- B. DCSD supports the prohibition of individuals possessing firearms, dangerous weapons and/or ammunition on school grounds unless the individual is employed exclusively as a security officer meeting the requirements for the use of a deadly weapon and with specific authorization from the District's Superintendent.

- C. DCSD opposes initiatives allowing concealed handgun permit holders to carry concealed handguns on school grounds, or any other measures to mandate increasing firearms in or around our schools.
- D. Just as the DCSD community supports local funding of counselors and efforts to support the social, emotional and mental well-being of students and staff, DCSD supports state or federally funded, research-proven initiatives to do the same.
- E. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to decrease bullying and hate within our schools.
- F. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to increase our student's social media literacy.

### **Collaborative Parent, Family and Community Relations**

- A. DCSD supports efforts to facilitate partnership with parents, guardians, families, and community members to empower students to maximize their individual educational experience.
- B. DCSD supports legislation recognizing that parents and students have a strong interest in protecting the privacy of student educational records maintained by the school district (i.e., all data created by students, teachers, and staff related to students).
- C. DCSD supports legislation promoting local resident-driven, locally funded school elections.

### **Financial Well-Being**

- A. DCSD supports the state providing Colorado's public schools with adequate and reliable funding pursuant to a formula that balances federal, state and local revenue sources, and is intended to fully fund the legal requirements for and meet the educational needs of all Colorado students. This will require comprehensive reform of the Colorado School Finance Act and overall State tax structure (including but not limited to: TABOR, Gallagher and Amendment 23).

- B. DCSD recognizes that new state legislation must expressly consider cost at the federal, state and local levels and be fully funded before it may be mandated and enforced.
- C. DCSD supports ensuring that public tax dollars for PK-12 education are used exclusively to fund PK-12 public schools. DCSD opposes efforts such as utilization of vouchers, education savings accounts or tax credits to divert public money to private PK-12 schools.
- D. DCSD recognizes that existing mandates that are not benefiting our students, or that have a larger cost than benefit to our students, must be rescinded so local boards may dedicate those financial resources to better use.
- E. DCSD supports complete funding of voluntary full-day kindergarten, and adequate funding for voluntary early childhood education, that does not come from current PK-12 funding resources.

Approved by the Douglas County School District Board of Education

\_\_\_\_\_, 2019

David Ray, Director District F, President  
Wendy Vogel, Director District A, Vice President  
Anne-Marie Lemieux, District C, Treasurer  
Krista Holtzmann, Director District G, Secretary  
Christina Ciancio-Schor, Director District D  
Anthony Graziano, Director District B  
Kevin Leung, Director District E

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David Ray, President

**DCSD Mission:**

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Krista Holtzmann, Secretary

The mission of the Douglas County School District is to provide an educational foundation that allows each student to reach his or her individual potential.

### **DCSD Core Values:**

Educational Excellence  
Human Diversity  
Individual Potential  
Lifelong Learning  
Productive Effort  
Shared Responsibility  
Ethical Behavior  
Continuous Improvement

### **DCSD Ends Statements:**

#### **Academic Excellence**

- A. All students have equitable access to a Douglas County public school that promotes growth in their cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs and builds on their strengths.
- B. Academic expectations are clearly articulated and supported with an appropriate curriculum that includes content, scope and sequence.
- C. Every student has equitable opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills that will ensure performance at his/her highest individual potential.
- D. A diverse set of educational options are provided which enables students to pursue different post secondary options (e.g. college, career and technology education, independent living, military or direct entrance into the workforce).
- E. Students graduate with acquired content and cultural knowledge, workforce readiness, interpersonal skills, civic responsibility, global awareness, independent living and an understanding of the essentials for health and wellness.

#### **Outstanding Educators and Staff**

- A. Quality educators and staff have been recruited, developed, supported, retained and celebrated.
- B. A positive, growth-oriented performance assessment system has been identified, adopted, and implemented.
- C. Research-based professional development opportunities are consistently provided, reflect best practices, allow for innovation, and promote
- D. lifelong learning.
- E. Communication between and among students, parents, community, educators and staff is frequent, collaborative, and helpful.
- F. Educators and staff are valued and given multiple opportunities for their voices to be heard.

#### **Safe, Positive Culture and Climate**

- A. A purposeful focus on creating a caring, safe, fun, supportive, and positive learning and working environment for all students, district employees, parents, and community is manifest throughout the district.

- B. There is clear evidence and a common understanding of the shared belief that all students can succeed when given a safe and caring learning environment. To that end:
  - 1. District employees, parents, and community work collaboratively, proactively and responsibly to ensure the psychological wellbeing of all students.
  - 2. A focused level of teamwork and professional development is on-going among district employees, community, and law enforcement agencies to ensure the physical safety of students, district employees and visitors.
- C. Behavior Expectations are clearly articulated, supported, and taught.
- D. Multiple communication systems are available and used by students, district employees, parents, and community to ensure all voices are heard.

### **Collaborative Parent, Family, and Community Relations**

- A. Parents, guardians, families, and community members partner with each other and the District to empower students to maximize their individual educational experience.
- B. Collaboration with community, business, government, educational, and organizational leaders is sought to provide opportunities for students to create positive change and provide service in our community.
- C. Schools are the center of community learning, entertainment and gathering.
- D. Multiple effective pathways for communication are available to all parents, guardians, families, community members, and district employees and are conducted with respect and kindness.

### **Financial Well-Being**

- A. The Board of Education and all district employees are good stewards of the financial resources belonging to the district on behalf of students and taxpayers.
- B. All district funds and expenditures are handled equitably, efficiently, transparently, responsibly, and purposefully to maximize the benefit for all students.
- C. All district fiscal transactions are legal, ethical, and appropriate in keeping with district regulations and goals.
- D. Long-term financial stability and accountability has been established, maintained, and actively monitored in order to accomplish Board of Education End Goals.