



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

These priorities guide the interactions between the Douglas County School District (DCSD) and local, state and national law and policy makers. 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.

The Douglas County Board of Education is the policy-making body of the school district. Its decisions guide the public education of the 6864,000 students in our public schools (~~representing over 90% of students in Douglas County~~). DCSD recognizes the importance of engaging and collaborating with elected officials, specifically those with shared Douglas County constituencies. Our priorities, outlined below, are aligned to this core tenant of local governance and to DCSD's End Statements (Goals), which were developed through a community engagement process in order to reflect our local communities' priorities. ~~DCSD area legislators are urged to contact district leadership prior to proposing or supporting significant changes to state law concerning PK-12. We look forward to partnering with the legislators who represent Douglas County so then can better understand the impact of modifying or creating state law that could affect PK-12 education and/or DCSD operations.~~

## Academic Excellence

- A. DCSD recognizes the Colorado State Board of Education's legislative mandate to adopt standards that identify the academic 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.~~ DCSD supports maintaining full local control over the instruction, curricula, professional development, and interventions needed to attain the 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. DCSD supports school choice where every student has access to high-quality options. DCSD respects the role of the parent/guardian to decide which high-quality option will provide the best opportunity for their student. DCSD supports local control over public school choice, including the district's authority to authorize public charter schools.~~
- 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.~~ DCSD supports a fair balance of measuring growth and achievement when assessments are mandated and/or utilized for school accountability measurements.
- D. ~~DCSD supports a fair balance of measuring growth and achievement when assessments are mandated and/or utilized for school accountability measurements.~~ DCSD supports eliminating redundancy in assessment mandates to maximize instructional time and use of financial resources while reducing testing fatigue for students and staff.
- 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 a more equitable school and district scoring system.~~

~~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 support local public school district efforts to identify and effectively support students with dyslexia. DCSD recognizes that "dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, which difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. The secondary consequences of dyslexia may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that may impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. We support early screening, professional development for educators, and additional funding to support students with these needs.~~

~~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.~~

E. DCSD supports and embraces accountability. We support a flexible and efficient assessment system that addresses accountability to the State, parents, and taxpayers while also fulfilling the needs of the district to drive instruction and maximize growth and achievement for every student. We recognize the ability of parents/guardians to opt their students out of assessments while also encouraging participation in standardized testing so that we may better understand, as early as possible, individual student strengths and areas that may require additional resources and/or intervention.

F. DCSD believes that it is imperative for the State to support and fund the needs of all learners, to include mainstream and Gifted and Talented students. Additional support and funding is required to better support our students with dyslexia; Affective Needs; Autism Spectrum Disorder; mild, moderate, or severe Special Needs; and our Twice Exceptions (2E) students. We also support early screening and professional development for educators to support students with these needs.

### **Outstanding Educators and Staff**

~~A. DCSD opposes 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. DCSD supports local boards' flexibility to place the best teacher in every classroom.~~

B. DCSD supports legislation that provides ~~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.~~ DCSD supports legislation that provides alternative pathways to teacher licensure, while maintaining rigorous standards, and ease of access to teacher preparation programs to help address the growing national teacher shortage.

~~C. DCSD supports 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 best practices!~~

C. DCSD supports local control over pay systems and strategies for all employee groups that acknowledge experience/longevity, knowledge, and performance (e.g. skills, professional growth, responsibilities, and collaboration).

D. DCSD supports local control over educator evaluation.

~~C.E.~~ DCSD supports efforts to eliminate mandates that overburden teachers and contribute to teachers leaving the profession – especially when faced with the current national teacher shortage and Colorado teachers earning almost 36% less than other workers with college degrees, the widest such gap in the nation.

### **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~~, to promote a safe school environment.

~~B.~~ DCSD supports legislation and funding that promote partnerships with local law enforcement and increase unified preparedness, facility hardening, and improved response protocols.

~~A.C.~~ 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 as a security officer, trained and proficient in the use of deadly force,~~ and with specific authorization from the District's Superintendent.

~~B.~~ 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.

~~C.~~ 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.

~~D.~~ DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to decrease incidences of bullying within our schools and prevent and address any and all discriminatory conduct or conduct targeting a student or group of students based on his/her perceived membership in a certain group or because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, sex, physical or mental disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or any such protected status.

~~E.~~ DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to increase our student's social media literacy.

~~F.~~ DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to address the epidemic of youth vaping.

~~G. DCSD supports considering the feasibility of reduction of carbon consumption within DCSD when making decisions regarding such things as capital improvements, energy use and transportation.~~

~~H. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to increase our student's financial literacy.~~

~~I. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to create high-quality CTE programs that emphasize equity and to provide opportunity for all students.~~

D. DCSD supports incentivized pathways for special service providers, including mental health providers and counselors. DCSD supports local control over mental health initiatives and programming.

E. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to create high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that provide an alternate pathways and opportunity for all students.

F. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to decrease incidences of bullying within our schools and prevent and address any and all discriminatory conduct or conduct targeting a student or group of students based on his/her perceived membership in a certain group or because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, sex, physical or mental disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or any such protected status.

G. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to increase our student's financial literacy.

H. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to increase our student's social media literacy to mitigate adverse effects on mental health.

I. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to address the fentanyl epidemic and access and exposure to and other harmful drugs.

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

A. DCSD supports efforts to facilitate partnership with parents, guardians, families, businesses, and community members to empower students to maximize their individual educational experience. DCSD supports legislation that respects and supports parents' values and beliefs while strengthening the mutually respectful partnership between parents and educators to support the academic growth and achievement of students. DCSD recognizes and respects parent's rights to instill in and nurture values and beliefs for their own children and to make decisions

concerning their children's education and upbringing in accordance with their customs, faith, and family culture.

- 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, equitable, 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. DCSD recognizes that comprehensive structural change is needed within the Colorado School Finance Act and overall State tax structure (including but not limited to: TABOR, Gallagher and Amendment 23) to meet this goal. DCSD supports changes to the School Finance Act that focus on student-based funding and the elimination of the Budget Stabilization Factor and desires to see this elimination prioritized before establishing new mandates with new funding.
- B. DCSD opposes all external unfunded mandates on education that would require additional expenditure of local resources or reallocation of current resources from existing programs. DCSD recognizes that new legislation must expressly consider costs 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 DCSD PK-12 public schools, including DCSD-authorized charter schools. DCSD opposes efforts such as utilization of vouchers, education savings accounts or tax credits to divert public money to private PK-12 schools within Douglas County.
- 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 and sustained funding of voluntary full-day kindergarten (with equitable access for all students), and adequate funding for voluntary early childhood education, that does not come from current PK-12 funding resources or efforts to restore lost funding due to the Budget Stabilization Factor. DCSD supports funding of voluntary full-day kindergarten and voluntary Universal Pre-K (with equitable access for all students), and adequate funding to ensure that both programs are sustainable over the long term.~~
- ~~F. DCSD supports an enrollment count system that has been developed with the collaboration of all Colorado districts and Superintendents to provide an enrollment count system that better serves the needs of all schools. However, DCSD opposes initiatives that decrease the current amount of revenue distributed to the district, as DCSD schools are underfunded by over 600 million dollars from what they would have received if the School Finance Act were fully funded.~~
- ~~G.F. \_\_\_\_\_ DCSD supports initiatives and legislative amendments that secure the financial viability of DCSD, including those that provide school districts with the same governmental immunity under which other governmental entities operate.~~

Approved by the Douglas County School District Board of Education this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020 by a vote of \_\_\_\_ -- \_\_\_\_.

~~David Ray, Director District F, President  
Krista Holtzmann I, Director District G, Vice President  
Kevin Leung, Director District E, Treasurer  
Elizabeth Hanson, Director District C, Secretary  
Christina Ciancio-Schor, Director District D  
Anthony Graziano, Director District B  
Susan Meek, Director District A~~

\_\_\_\_\_  
~~David Ray~~ Mike Peterson, President  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
~~Elizabeth Hanson~~ Beck Myers,

**DCSD Mission:**



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 ongoing 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.