



Superintendent Kane’s Response to Comments in the 2022 General Election Tabor Book

Regarding DCSD’s Mill Levy Override (5A) and Bond (5B)

At the October 11 Board of Education meeting, DCSD Superintendent Kane addressed statements made in the 2022 General Election Tabor Book (sometimes referred to as the “Blue Book”) that were in opposition to DCSD’s Mill Levy Override (5A) and Bond (5B).

About the General Election Tabor Book (Sometimes Referred to as the “Blue Book”)

Who Can Submit Comments for the General Election Tabor Book?

Any registered voter eligible to vote on a local initiative can submit pro or con statements about any ballot initiative for publication in the General Election Tabor Book.

Are Tabor Book Statements Fact-Checked?

Everything published in the Tabor Book (whether pro or con) is submitted by citizens and must be printed as submitted. There is no fact-checking process prior to publication.

Statements about 5A and 5B from the 2022 General Election Tabor Book

Superintendent Kane addressed some misinformation that was included in the General Election Tabor Book about DCSD’s Mill Levy Override (5A) and Bond (5B). [Click here to view a video of Superintendent Kane’s full comments.](#)

Claim: *By 2024, DCSD’s Mill Levy Override (5A) would result in an additional tax impact to homeowners as home valuations are re-assessed.*

FACT: 5A (Mill Levy Override) is a fixed dollar amount (\$60 million). If passed it will cost homeowners \$1 per week per \$100,000 of current assessed home value. When homes are re-assessed and values rise, the cost to residents for the MLO will not increase. In fact, it will decrease over time as more homes and businesses are built in Douglas County.

Claim: *DCSD should not compare its salaries to the high teacher salaries in Boulder Valley and Cherry Creek school districts.*

FACT: DCSD is not comparing its salaries with Boulder Valley School District. However, it does need to compare its salaries with Cherry Creek School District in order to remain competitive. Cherry Creek School District shares a border with Douglas County School District. Currently DCSD teachers can make, on average, \$18,000 more per year at Cherry Creek School District, which is a short drive away from DCSD.

Claim: *For the 13 largest school districts in Colorado, the average teacher salary is \$63,000 so DCSD is in the normal range.*

FACT: DCSD's average teacher pay is \$58,000 per year (\$5,000 less than the average state salary listed above) which is not insignificant. In addition, Douglas County is one of the most expensive places to live in Colorado. A statewide comparison in terms of average teacher salary is not entirely fair as it doesn't take into account where our teachers live. Other areas of the state such as rural areas have a lower cost of living compared to Douglas County.

Claim: *More money spent on education does not buy better outcomes. DCSD already has better outcomes than Cherry Creek School District (meaning DCSD is doing better with less money).*

FACT: We are proud of the value that DCSD offers its citizens. However, DCSD wants to retain its teachers. If DCSD cannot keep the amazing teachers who are doing the great work which is resulting in great outcomes, it won't be able to keep its current high performance. Investing in teachers and staff by providing more competitive pay is a strategy to preserve the school district's current outcomes and position in the state of Colorado.

Claim: *If Douglas County School District gave each of its teachers a 10% raise the cost would be \$5,800 per teacher (based on 10% of the average teacher salary) X 4,400 licensed teachers which is only \$25.5 Million. This does not equal the \$60 million being requested via a Mill Levy Override.*

FACT: All 8,600 employees in DCSD would receive a pay increase, not just teachers. DCSD's teachers would receive an average 9% raise, classified staff (including custodians, educational assistants, kitchen workers, etc.) would receive a 9% raise, and Professional/Technical/Administrative staff would receive a 6% raise.

Each pay increase also comes with an increase in the cost of employee benefits including Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) contributions. PERA is the retirement plan that public schools participate in in lieu of social security. All public educators in Colorado participate in PERA (this is not unique to DCSD nor is it optional). DCSD as an employer pays 21% of salaries into PERA, and each employee pays close to 11% of their salary into PERA.

In total, \$44.5M of the Mill Levy Override would be used for district salary and benefits increases. The other \$15.5M would be shared with Douglas County School District-authorized charter schools for compensation and benefits increases at those schools. Of the \$44.5M district-share, \$31.2M would go towards teacher salary increases and the associated PERA costs and \$13.2M would go to support and other staff (salaries and PERA).

Claim: *The Mill Levy Override (5A) is a general fund money grab for the school district.*

FACT: The Ballot Language for 5A limits the use of the Mill Levy Override dollars to compensation and benefits. The money cannot be used for other purposes. In addition, the DCSD Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution about using the Mill Levy Override for staff pay and benefits, and if 5A is passed by voters, that resolution would automatically go into effect, meaning teachers and staff would receive their respective pay increases retroactive back to July 1, 2022 (the start of the current school year). No further board vote is needed.

Claim: *The Bond (5B) would be used for current expenses that were already planned.*

FACT: All Bond expenditures would be for capital investments not for operational costs. The capital investments are not part of DCSD's current expenses. Capital investments (such as the construction of new schools) would only occur if the Bond is passed.

Claim: *DCSD is over-estimating its future growth.*

FACT: DCSD enrollment has been more or less flat for some time. However, DCSD is 844 square miles (two-thirds the size of Rhode Island). On average, growth is flat, but DCSD has areas of significant growth as well as areas of significant decline. It is the responsibility of the school district to address both growth and decline. Growth and decline are happening in completely different geographical areas. DCSD cannot move a school from one area of the county to another.

Claim: *DCSD's enrollment declined during the pandemic.*

FACT: DCSD's enrollment dipped by 2,000 students between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year. A large contributor to that reduction was the closure of HOPE Online Elementary, a charter school that was authorized by DCSD. Many of the students attending HOPE Online Elementary resided outside of Douglas County. Like school districts across the nation, DCSD did lose a good number of students during the pandemic for a variety of reasons. DCSD is continuously working to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students, and to bring the students who left DCSD back home to our school district.

Claim: *DCSD parents are concerned about woke ideology and indoctrination in the curriculum.*

FACT: DCSD is dedicated to promoting positive partnerships between parents, teachers and schools. DCSD follows Colorado state standards, and DCSD, as a district, is absolutely NOT promoting any sort of "woke ideology". If a parent has concerns about something happening in their child's school or classroom we encourage them to kindly reach out to their teacher directly to have a conversation about their concerns - building these essential parent-teacher relationships is key to the success of each of our students.