



# Denver Plan 2020

# Every Child Succeeds







## Introduction

Every child takes that first step into the first day of school with butterflies . . . and talent, potential and dreams. It's the day that the door to the world opens to them through their education. That's **Every** Child, regardless of where our children live, how much money their parents make, their ability level or the color of their skin. Every child deserves a high-quality school, and we all play vital roles: families being involved in their child's education; educators having high expectations and providing excellent instruction and strong supports; and everyone being actively engaged and invested in the future of our children and our city.

Opening the door to a world of opportunity for our kids is not enough. It's our shared vision in Denver Public Schools that *Every Child Succeeds*. Regardless of which school they choose to attend, we need to make sure they are cared for, challenged, inspired, supported and ready for success in college, career and life. From that first tentative step into preschool to that last confident step off the commencement stage on graduation day, we are here to settle the butterflies and unleash the potential.

The Denver Plan 2020 will guide the district's decision-making, including where to focus and how to best allocate people, time and money. The Plan charts our path to Every Child Succeeds.

## What We've Achieved

Educators, families and community members have already begun the journey toward the vision of *Every Child Succeeds*. Denver Public Schools (DPS) first created the Denver Plan in 2006 and updated the plan in 2010. The results are promising. In the last six years, DPS dramatically expanded preschool and kindergarten opportunities, posted record enrollment increases, drove the highest rate of student progress of any major district in the state, increased the graduation rate by 23 percentage points and cut its dropout rate in half.

While our vision is clear and our progress certain, there is a long road ahead. We are grateful for the commitment and hard work of our educators, which has led DPS to become the fastest growing urban district in the country. At the same time, our large achievement gaps are not closing, and not every child is succeeding.

To build upon the momentum of the last several years, DPS will focus on the changes that have proven successful and introduce new strategies to continue to drive innovation and progress. In the first half of 2014, we spoke with nearly 3,000 stakeholders—students, parents and families, teachers, school leaders, community partners and other school district employees—who have offered us vital feedback. Based on this input, we have established a few critical goals and key strategic priorities. DPS is raising the bar to ensure that our children have every possible advantage on the road to becoming well-prepared, successful, civically engaged adults.

# What We Believe

Our Shared Core Values and our Core Beliefs serve as the foundation for all of our work at DPS and are the essence of our culture.

Our Shared Core Values bring us together and drive how we interact with each other in pursuit of our vision of *Every Child Succeeds*. Created in August 2012 by more than 1,000 people from across the district, these values shape our shared culture and guide our decisions about how to meet our goals.

## DPS Shared Core Values

### Students First:

We put our kids' needs at the forefront of everything we do.

### Integrity:

We tell the truth, and we keep our promises.

### Equity:

We celebrate our diversity and will provide the necessary resources and supports to eliminate barriers to success and foster a more equitable future for all our kids.

### Collaboration:

Together as a team, we think, we work and we create in order to reach our goals.

### Accountability:

We take responsibility for our individual and collective commitments, we grow from success, and we learn from failure.

### Fun:

We celebrate the joy in our work and foster in our students a joy and passion for learning to last their whole lives.

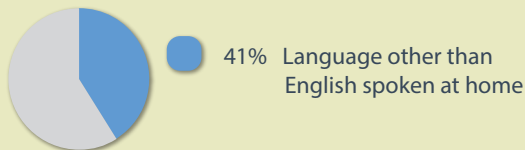
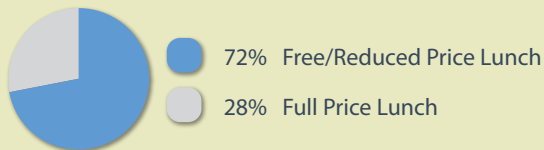
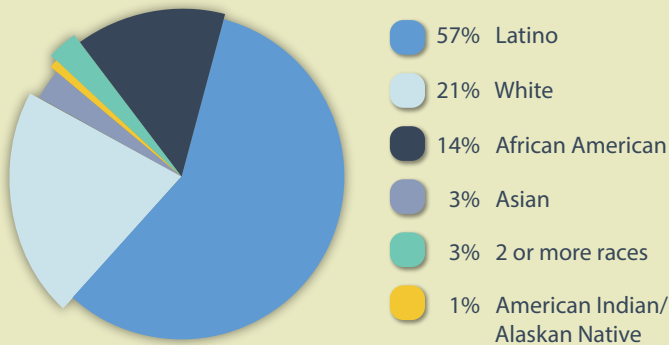


## Our Vision: Every Child Succeeds

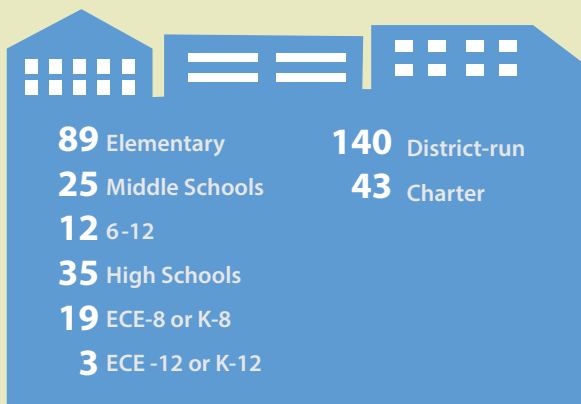
### Great Schools in Every Neighborhood



## Student Demographics



## Total number of schools: 183



## Our Core Beliefs

Our Core Beliefs build upon the Shared Core Values and drive how we prioritize our efforts and resources and determine how we measure our success. We affirm that:

- **Every child has talent and potential.**

It is up to us to challenge and support each child with a rigorous, well-rounded and culturally relevant education.

- **Our diversity is a community treasure, and equity is the core of our mission.**

We commit to building a culture that embraces the unique identity and potential of every child.

- **We can and will eliminate the opportunity gap that leads to achievement gaps.**

We must remove school-based barriers to success, focus on accountability and invest resources early to target, support and challenge the students with the most need.

- **We must dramatically accelerate the progress we've made by investing more in what is working and embracing innovation.**

By providing a 21st century education, we will empower our students to graduate from high school prepared to thrive in college, career and life.

- **Every family deserves choice and access to high quality schools in their neighborhood.**

We commit to providing excellent schools throughout the district.

- **Our kids need all of us—educators, families, community partners and staff—and together, we are Team DPS.**

We must empower our families and be united in embracing transparency, proactive communication and strategies for improvement.

## Where We Are Going

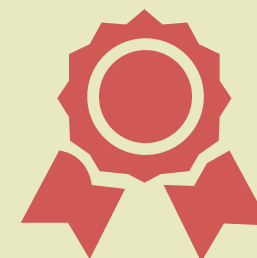
Opening the discussion to the entire Denver community has allowed us to collectively identify one overarching goal to achieve by 2020, along with four supporting goals. With these five goals we will increase focus on the areas critical for our students' success. If we can achieve these goals, other positive outcomes will follow.

### Goal 1

## Great Schools in Every Neighborhood

Students and families thrive when they have high-quality education choices. DPS will dramatically increase the quality of schools available in every neighborhood to ensure that every student in every community throughout the district has access to great schools.

**By 2020, 80% of DPS students will attend a high-performing school, measured by region using the district's school performance framework.**



### Students Attending a High Performing School

NOW	→	2020
<b>61%</b>		<b>80%</b>

### Goal 2

## A Foundation for Success in School

A focus on preparedness in early childhood education builds an essential foundation that sets the course for a student's entire academic experience. Students who read and write at grade level in 3rd grade are likely to be at grade level or above in reading, writing and mathematics in 10th grade. Therefore, DPS will focus on preparedness from preschool through third grade, with strong instructional supports for students whose native language is not English.

**By 2020, 80% of DPS third-graders will be at or above grade level in reading and writing, lectura and escritura.\***

\*Baseline likely to change with transition to Common Core and may require a target reconsideration in 2015-16.



### 3rd Grade Reading & Writing Proficiency

NOW	→	2020
<b>60%</b>		<b>80%</b>





### Graduation Rate

NOW → 2020  
**68%** → **90%**



### Students Graduating College & Career Ready

NOW → 2020  
**1100** → **2200**



### African American & Latino Graduation Rate

NOW → 2020  
**64%** → **89%**



### African American & Latino 3rd Grade Reading & Writing Proficiency

NOW → 2020  
**50%** → **75%**

## Goal 3

### Ready for College & Career

By inspiring, challenging and empowering all students—including those with special learning needs and those already achieving at high levels—to forge their own future, we will instill the next generation of young professionals with confidence, competence and a healthy work ethic. DPS will dramatically increase the number of successful college- and career-prepared graduates.

**By 2020, the four-year graduation rate for students who start with DPS in ninth grade will increase to 90%.**

**By 2020, we will double the number of students who graduate college and career-ready, as measured by the increasing rigor of the state standard.**

## Goal 4

### Support for the Whole Child

DPS is committed to creating a setting that fosters the growth of the whole child. Our school environments will encourage students to pursue their passions and interests, support their physical health and strengthen the social/emotional skills they need to succeed, including managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships and making responsible decisions.

**By 2015, a task force, including DPS staff, community partners and city agencies providing services to DPS students, will recommend to the Board of Education a plan to measure this goal and track progress.**

## Goal 5

### Close the Opportunity Gap

All of our students deserve access to educational opportunities that allow them to achieve at the highest levels. This means raising the bar for all students while acknowledging that there is a persistent gap between the performance of our white students and our African American and Latino students. We believe it is critical to shine a light on the issue of race and the achievement gap that persists for our students of color, even when poverty is not a factor. For these reasons, we feel it critical to put in place a goal that focuses on the opportunity gap.

**By 2020, the graduation rate for African American and Latino students will increase by 25 percentage points.**

**Reading and writing proficiency for third-grade African American and Latino students will increase by 25 percentage points.\***

\*Baseline likely to change with transition to Common Core and may require a target reconsideration in 2015-16.

# How We Will Get There

Vision is only realized through action. Our strategic priorities provide guidance on where DPS will focus its resources and establish the roadmap necessary to achieve our goals. The five strategic priority areas are:

## Leadership:

- Attract, develop and retain strong, values-based leaders across DPS.
- Advance distributed leadership structures in schools through developing and empowering teacher leaders.
- Develop strong pipelines for leadership, including internal cultivation, school leader preparation programs and focused mentorship.
- Ensure school leaders are prepared, supported and held accountable for the success of their students and for meeting the unique needs of their school communities.

## Teaching:

- Significantly increase the quality and rigor of classroom instruction through a deep implementation of grade-level content standards and best practice instructional strategies targeting the needs of English language learners.
- Improve support systems—including feedback and coaching loops, curriculum and professional development—and refine progress monitoring tools and assessments.
- Enhance our efforts to recruit, develop and retain effective teachers for every DPS school with incentives and supports for teaching in our highest needs schools.
- Implement intentional strategies to focus on culturally responsive education in every classroom.

## Flexibility:

- Empower schools through flexible, school-based decision-making, including the use of resources.
- Expand high-quality school choices in all communities through differentiated supports for existing schools, new school strategies, turnaround efforts and strong accountability systems.
- Provide schools with opportunities to innovate and create environments that best meet the academic and social/emotional needs of their students, including expansion of personalized learning environments.

## Invest Early:

- Prioritize resources in the early grades (preschool-3rd grade) to set up our youngest students for later success.
- Partner with community organizations to expand high-quality supports and services for families with young children to build the foundation for academic success.

## Culture:

- Live, celebrate and hold ourselves accountable to our Shared Core Values.
- Build positive, empowering cultures at all of our schools that embrace families and communities.
- Promote a culture of service to schools across DPS support functions and DPS partners.



## Call To Action

Every child deserves to be in an atmosphere of high expectations. To accomplish the goals articulated in this plan, we must build upon all that we have learned and gained in recent years and we must elevate our focus on people—starting with our teachers and school leaders and extending to students, families and community partners. Everyone is valued, and everyone must play a crucial role.

- At DPS, we will hold ourselves accountable to the goals and the strategies in this plan.
- Teachers, school leaders and staff, we ask you to hold our students to higher expectations and to model those standards in your own behavior.
- Parents and families, we ask you to raise the bar at home and give your children the support they need to succeed at school.
- Community partners, we ask you to consider committing more of your time and talent.

Together, we can make the vision real—*Every Child Succeeds*.



The Denver Plan has been shaped by the insights of many — special thanks to:

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