



## **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 approximately 63,000 students in our public schools. 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. We look forward to partnering with the legislators who represent Douglas County so they 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. 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 high-quality public education options and school choice. 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 a fair balance of measuring growth and achievement when assessments are mandated and/or utilized for school accountability measurements.
- D. 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 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 supports a redesigned accountability system that accurately and comprehensively measures and advances students' learning and progress, allows districts the flexibility to use assessments aligned to standards, is meaningful to the local community, encourages continuous improvement, and does not result in punitive consequences due to reliance on a single assessment for the accountability clock and/or low participation in state assessments.

- G. DCSD believes that it is imperative for the State to support and fund **all** learners based on their individual needs. We also support additional funding for early screening and professional development for educators to support students.
- H. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to create high-quality Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that provide pathways and opportunity for all students.
- I. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to increase our student's financial and digital literacy.
- J. DCSD supports funded legislative efforts to address safe and ethical use of technological tools such as AI (artificial intelligence) and social media.

### **Outstanding Educators and Staff**

- A. DCSD supports local boards' flexibility to set policy to determine teaching eligibility requirements and to create additional pathways to licensure.
- B. DCSD supports legislation that provides additional pathways to teacher licensure, while maintaining rigorous standards, and ease of access to teacher preparation programs to help address the growing national teacher shortage. This includes the expansion of K-12 teacher preparation programs, accessibility and funding.
- 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 opposes additional mandates concerning educator evaluation.
- 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 promote a safe and welcoming school environment, including reduction in gun violence, mental health support, and addressing access and exposure to harmful drugs.
- B. DCSD supports legislation and funding that promote partnerships with local law enforcement and increase unified preparedness, facility hardening, and improved response protocols.
- C. DCSD supports the prohibition of individuals possessing firearms, dangerous weapons and/or ammunition on school grounds unless the individual is exclusively employed as a security officer, trained and proficient in the use of deadly force, meets or exceeds Colorado

Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification standards, and has specific authorization from the District's Superintendent.

- 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 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.
- F. DCSD supports locally developed plans to address disproportionate disciplinary practices.
- G. DCSD supports adequately funded programs to support the health and wellness of all students including access to appropriate nutrition.

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

- A. DCSD supports efforts to facilitate partnership with parents, educators, guardians, families, businesses, 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, 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.
- 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 county public tax dollars for PK-12 education are used exclusively to fund PK-12 public schools, including district-authorized charter schools. DCSD opposes efforts such as utilization of vouchers, education savings accounts or tax credits that divert public school 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 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 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.
- G. DCSD supports additional federal funding to continue to offset and recover from negative academic, mental health, and social effects that occurred as a result of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- H. DCSD supports full funding of requirements associated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure a free appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities throughout the District and provide special education and related services to those students.
- I. DCSD opposes efforts by external forces to interfere with locally enacted mill levies.

Approved by the Douglas County School District Board of Education this 12<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023 by a vote of 6-0.

AYES: Geiger, Meek, Myers, Thompson, Williams, Winegar

NAYS: N/A



*Christy Williams*

Christy Williams, President

*Becky Myers*

Becky Myers, Secretary

**DCSD Mission & Vision:**

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.

The Douglas County School District strives to maximize the potential of every student to pursue his or her chosen endeavor in society, including but not limited to post- secondary education, career, or military service.

## **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.

## Document Details

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