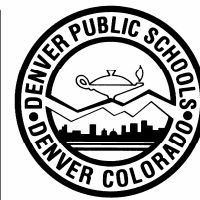


Denver Public Schools
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
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Tel 720-423-3332 Fax 720-423-3318



October 1, 2007

Dear Smedley Elementary School Parents:

Today we are announcing a package of reforms to dramatically improve opportunities for our students and secure the future of Denver Public Schools (DPS). The reforms will be presented in a meeting with A+ Denver, a citizens group of 150 people, who live or work in Denver and whose mission is to make student achievement and public school reform the top priority in Denver. Taken together, we believe these reforms will help us ensure that our district can break the cycle of painful cuts to schools over the past five years.

A+ Denver's Facilities and Finance subcommittee spent months reviewing our finances, studying every aspect of our budget, examining student achievement trends, and the portfolio of programs and services we offer to Denver families. They made recommendations regarding our financial condition and provided criteria for us to use in making recommendations for school closures. With the capacity to serve 100,000 students and a current student population of 68,000, the committee concluded that school closures needed to be one part, but not the only part, of efforts to address key financial challenges facing the District and to significantly improve our ability to deliver the educational promises of the Denver Plan.

Included in our package of reforms, we are recommending that Smedley Elementary School be closed and Smedley students be reassigned to a new ECE-8 program in the Horace Mann facility located at 4130 Navajo St. in fall, 2008. We know this is a very hard decision for the affected children and families, but we believe that the new school will provide a much richer, academic opportunity.

Smedley Elementary School has experienced steady declines in enrollment in the past several years. With only 338 early childhood education and kindergarten through sixth grade students, it is a challenge to meet students' needs with a shrinking budget and to hire enough teachers to offer a comprehensive elementary school program. In addition to declining enrollment, state rating and student achievement levels are not where we want them to be. As you know, Smedley Elementary School has been rated "low" based on Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) results – for three consecutive years.

Remington Elementary School Principal, Veronica Benavidez, will be the Principal of the new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann. The new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann will also be the school of reassignment for Remington Elementary School, which is also being recommended for closure. If Smedley is your neighborhood school, your student will be guaranteed a seat in the new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann next year. If your student is at Smedley on choice, he or

she will have priority in the choice process to attend the new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann. While the current 6-8 program at Horace Mann is closing, 6th and 7th graders currently attending Horace Mann will have the option to continue their education at the new ECE-8 program next fall. Smedley students receiving mild/moderate special education services will move with their peers to the new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann. Savings from the closures of Smedley and Remington will be reinvested in the new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann.

We understand how troubling this school closure will be for your family, and we are prepared to work closely with you to provide clear information about the new school being created and provide support to students changing schools. We are confident that these closure recommendations meet the A+ Denver criteria and that the new ECE-8 program at Horace Mann will offer your student a better education than he or she is receiving today.

The Board of Education will vote on our recommendations on November 19, 2007.

We look forward to meeting with you about the reasons for the recommended closure and about how we can better serve your child at their new school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael F. Bennet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large "M" and "B".

Michael F. Bennet
Superintendent