DPS is a diverse district. When all our students know they are respected, challenged and supported, they will be more successful as students – and in turn, we will be a more successful community.

Equity: The Core of Our Mission

77% of our students are students of color and more than one-third of our students are English language learners. One of our district’s core beliefs, found in our Denver Plan 2020, is that this diversity is a community treasure and equity is at the core of our mission. DPS will always welcome, support and protect our diverse student body.

From educational opportunities to hiring practices to discipline policies, we focus on how our actions further our shared core value of equity. When all our students know they are respected, challenged and supported, they will be more successful as students – and in turn, we will be a more successful community.

Targeting Resources

We believe that it is critical that we provide a base level of resources to all students in the district while targeting extra resources to the students who need them most.

Our student-based budgeting system provides a base amount of funding to all students while weighting additional funding for students living in poverty, or learning English as a second language.

Thanks to the support of Denver voters, an additional $56 Million in funding was allocated in 2016, targeted to at least a 4:1 ratio in favor of students who are economically disadvantaged.

We target resources to provide compensation incentives for teachers to join our hardest-to-serve schools. This year, $12 Million in compensation incentives is earmarked for teachers in Title I schools and Spanish-proficient ELA teachers.

Improving Equitable Instruction

We believe in improved instruction through ongoing professional development and teaching of intentional strategies. Culturally Responsive Education training and English Language Acquisition qualification are required for all incoming DPS educators. Our Inclusive Practices and Opportunity Gap cohorts help schools develop data-driven supports for historically disadvantaged students and share best practices.

Engaging Families and Community

We will continue to engage with our students, families and community members in this critically important dialogue. We’re expanding the nation’s largest Parent-Teacher Home Visit program, and have just opened the Center For Family Opportunity, which provides free services to help community members build life skills and increase economic self-sufficiency.

Equity and Gentrification

As Denver continues to grow and housing prices increase, our diverse neighborhoods are struggling to balance the challenges of gentrification with their rich cultural histories. To address these concerns, DPS has created the Strengthening Neighborhoods Initiative.

Building Equitable Employment Practices and Work Environments

Our focus on recruitment and retention of educators of color continues to grow through external partnerships and internal supports, including the Make Your Mark recruitment campaign.

We have launched employee resource groups and mentorship programs that focus on increasing equity, inclusion and a sense of belonging for educators throughout the district.
DPS created the Strengthening Neighborhoods Initiative to make recommendations about how our district can drive greater socio-economic integration in our schools, and to explore ways that school choice and school consolidation could make it possible for DPS schools to offer high-quality programs for our children. Learn more at dpsk12.org/neighborhoods.

Closing Gaps

DPS, like many large urban school districts, has wide and persistent achievement gaps that exist between our students of color and our white students, our English learners and our native English speakers, our students living in poverty and those with socioeconomic privilege, and students with disabilities and those without disabilities. We believe that the root cause of those achievement gaps is, in fact, an opportunity gap – in which some student groups have not had equitable access to the educational opportunities and supports that would allow them to achieve their full potential.

Our educators share responsibility for raising the achievement of all students while eliminating the gaps in opportunity and achievement that persist for historically disadvantaged student groups such as students of color, students living in poverty and students learning English as a second language.

Developing a more equitable culture throughout DPS is one of the strategies we have in place to achieve our Denver Plan 2020 goal of Closing the Opportunity Gap. For more information about these strategies, visit opportunitygap.dpsk12.org.

Accountability for Equity

We hold ourselves accountable to creating equitable systems to ensure the success of our students and teachers. Our tiered support system ensures that our highest needs schools receive the highest level of support.

Our School Performance Framework incorporates an Academic Gaps indicator, which is a way for us to see at-a-glance how well schools are serving student populations that are historically underserved, and to understand opportunity gaps at any given school. A school cannot be rated Green or Blue overall unless they also rate Green or Blue on the Academic Gaps indicator.

Additional Information:

Learn more about our Culture, Equity and Leadership Team’s equity and inclusion efforts at celt.dpsk12.org/equity/. For more information about how we are closing the Opportunity Gap, visit opportunitygap.dpsk12.org.

Questions? E-mail communications@dpsk12.org.