

Policy 1K - STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO FOCUS ITS ATTENTION AND ENERGY ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED IN THE DISTRICT AND ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR STUDENTS. THE BOARD IS ACCOUNTABLE TO AND IS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN SETTING ACADEMIC PRIORITIES TO ENSURE THE BEST USE OF FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE DISTRICT.

THE BOARD'S VISION IS THAT DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE THE BEST BIG CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE NATION. WE WILL LEAD THE NATION'S CITIES IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, COLLEGE PREPARATION, AND COLLEGE MATRICULATION. OUR STUDENTS WILL BE WELL PREPARED FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE, WORK, CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY, AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION THE BOARD ADOPTS THE FOLLOWING CORE BELIEFS WHICH WILL GOVERN DISTRICT POLICY DECISIONS.

BOARD'S CORE BELIEFS

- WE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS LEARN AT GRADE LEVEL OR HIGHER AND REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. NO EXCUSES.
 - *THE CAPACITY TO LEARN IS NOT DETERMINED OR LIMITED BY RACE, FAMILY INCOME, NATIVE LANGUAGE, GENDER OR AREA OF RESIDENCE. IT IS THE DISTRICT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INSPIRE HIGH LEVELS OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS, PROVIDE RESOURCES, AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO ENSURE ACHIEVEMENT.*

- WE WILL PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY TEACHING TO ALL STUDENTS SINCE TEACHING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DRIVER OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.
 - *WE STRIVE TO RECRUIT, RETAIN AND SUPPORT HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS FOR EVERY CLASSROOM. WE BELIEVE STUDENTS LEARN MOST EFFECTIVELY THROUGH DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION BASED ON INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' NEEDS AND WHEN TEACHING AND CURRICULA ARE RELEVANT TO THEIR OWN CULTURES, BACKGROUNDS, INTEREST AND LEARNING STYLES.*

- WE WILL ELIMINATE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP.

- *WE ARE COMMITTED TO EMPLOYING RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ACHIEVEMENT AND CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT DOING SO MAY REQUIRE THE INVESTMENT OF UNEQUAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE AN EQUITABLE OUTCOME.*
- WE WILL HAVE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERFORMANCE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE SYSTEM.
 - *WE BELIEVE IN DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AT ALL LEVELS. ALL DISTRICT ACTIVITIES WILL BE MEASURED BY THEIR ABILITY TO INCREASE THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS ACROSS THE DISTRICT.*
- WE BELIEVE IN AN INTENTIONAL POSITIVE CULTURE WHERE EVERY ADULT SERVES AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
 - *WE BELIEVE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN AND WORK, SCHOOLS AND AN EMPLOYER CHOSEN BY THE COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYEES.*
- WE WILL INCLUDE PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY AS VALUED PARTNERS TO ENSURE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
 - *WE BELIEVE THE COMMUNITY MUST ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHILDREN. IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR OUR STUDENTS WILL REQUIRE SUPPORT FROM ALL SEGMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY. WE ACTIVELY SEEK PRODUCTIVE COLLABORATION ACROSS THE DENVER COMMUNITY.*

THE BOARD'S THEORY OF REFORM WILL PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK TO DRIVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN, POLICIES, RESOURCES AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL REFORM WE MUST IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CLASSROOM TEACHING. EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IS KEY TO EVERY SUCCESSFUL REFORM AND IT IS A PROVEN MODEL THAT HAS WORKED TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN NUMEROUS URBAN DISTRICTS ACROSS THE NATION.

THE BOARD ADOPTS AN INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM THEORY FOR DENVER THAT HAS THE FOLLOWING ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS THAT WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

- A CONSISTENT CORE CURRICULUM FOR EVERY GRADE AND SUBJECT THAT IS ALIGNED WITH STATE STANDARDS
- A HIGHLY SKILLED STAFF IN EVERY SCHOOL SUPPORTED BY FACILITATORS
- DIFFERENTIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUPPORT OF STAFF AND CURRICULUM

- ASSESSMENT TO INFORM INSTRUCTION AND TRACK ACHIEVEMENT

THIS IS AN INTEGRATED REFORM STRATEGY THAT ADDRESSES THREE OF DPS'S GREATEST CHALLENGES—A HIGH MOBILITY RATE AMONG OUR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, LOW ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS OF OUR STUDENTS, AND LACK OF CONSISTENT AND TIMELY DATA ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EACH ELEMENT IS DEFINED:

- HIGHLY SKILLED STAFF THAT IS EMPOWERED BY ROBUST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REAL-TIME ASSESSMENT DATA. PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS WILL SERVE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS OF THE FACULTY IN DPS SCHOOLS. ALL SCHOOL STAFF WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIFFERENTIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO ENHANCE TEACHING PRACTICES IN ALL DPS CLASSROOMS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP A BEST IN CLASS HR ORGANIZATION SO THAT WE RECRUIT, HIRE DEVELOP AND RETAIN HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND SUPPORT STAFF.
- CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALIGNED TO COLORADO'S STATE STANDARDS. ALL STUDENTS WILL COMPLETE A RIGOROUS 12-YEAR COURSE OF STUDY AND WILL MEET OR EXCEED STATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IN FOUR CORE AREAS (LITERACY, MATH, SCIENCE, AND SOCIAL STUDIES) AND BE PREPARED TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE. IN ADDITION, STUDENTS WILL BE OFFERED COMPELLING CURRICULAR CHOICES THAT COMPLEMENT THE CORE AREAS.
- A DYNAMIC VIEW OF SCHOOL CHOICE THAT RECOGNIZES THAT EVERY DPS SCHOOL SHOULD BE AN EXCELLENT CHOICE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS, EACH WITH ITS OWN COMPELLING STORY TO TELL. DENVER'S SCHOOLS WILL ALL HAVE A SOLID CORE OF ACADEMIC OFFERINGS THAT MEET OR EXCEED STATE AND DISTRICT STANDARDS FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE, AROUND WHICH THEY WILL WRAP ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC CHOICES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE INTERESTS OF PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. THE DISTRICT AND ITS SCHOOLS WILL BE EMPOWERED TO RESEARCH, DEVELOP, AND IMPLEMENT COMPELLING NEW ACADEMIC MODELS, BUT THESE MODELS WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO EXCEED MEASURED PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS. PARENTS AND

STUDENTS WILL MAKE AFFIRMATIVE CHOICES TO SELECT THE SCHOOL WHERE THEY WILL REACH OR EXCEED THEIR FULL ACADEMIC POTENTIAL.

- A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PLAN WILL PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH REAL-TIME INFORMATION ON THE ACADEMIC GROWTH OF EACH STUDENT AND ALLOW TEACHERS TO MORE EFFECTIVELY DIFFERENTIATE INSTRUCTION. STUDENT PERFORMANCE WILL BE ASSESSED REGULARLY IN ALL COURSES DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR USING A CONSISTENT AND COHERENT SET OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS. STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS ON A REGULAR BASIS AND IN A CONSISTENT MANNER.

EACH STUDENT IS EXPECTED TO MEET OR EXCEED THE DISTRICT'S ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS BEFORE THEY TRANSITION FROM LEVEL TO LEVEL AND BEFORE THEY ARE ELIGIBLE TO GRADUATE. WHILE ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO REACH THE STANDARDS, THE BOARD ACKNOWLEDGES THAT DIFFERENCES IN PERFORMANCE WILL EXIST AMONG STUDENTS. IN ACADEMIC AREAS, JUST AS IN SOCIAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, CHILDREN HAVE DIVERSE CAPABILITIES AND INDIVIDUAL PATTERNS OF GROWTH AND LEARNING.

THE SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING. THE BOARD EXPECTS EACH STUDENT TO STUDY AND LEARN TO THE BEST OF HIS/HER ABILITY, AND EACH STAFF MEMBER TO HELP IN DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A CLIMATE THAT ENCOURAGES AND SUPPORTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND HIGH STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR. THE DISTRICT CONTENT STANDARDS ARE TO BE THE FOCAL POINT OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION.

TO FULFILL THIS EXPECTATION, ALL STUDENTS WILL BE PROVIDED CHALLENGING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS. STUDENT LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE WILL BE CONTINUOUSLY MONITORED AGAINST THE STANDARDS THROUGH THE USE OF VALID AND RELIABLE MEASURES.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS ADOPTING THIS POLICY TO PROMOTE, CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT LEADS THE NATION IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION,

COLLEGE PREPARATION, AND COLLEGE MATRICULATION. THE SUPERINTENDENT IS DIRECTED TO COMPLY, MODIFY AND IMPLEMENT THE CORE BELIEF AND ACTION PLAN AS NECESSARY.

ADOPTED: _____, 2006

LEGAL REFS: C.R.S. 22-7-101 ET SEQ. (*EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT*)
C.R.S. 22-7-401 ET SEQ. (*EDUCATIONAL REFORM*)
C.R.S. 22-11-101 ET SEQ. (*EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION ACT*)

CROSS REFS: AE - ACCOUNTABILITY/COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHMENT