

Denver Public Schools Accomplishments of 2005-2006

General

- Wrote the Denver Plan, a living document that outlines the district's vision and ambitious goals. Nearly every reform and improvement initiative is tied to the Plan in some way. Superintendent Bennet introduced the Plan's skeleton in the fall, and literally scores of teachers, administrators and community members have served on work groups to implement its goals.
- Chief Academic Officer and the Superintendent completed 91 daily principal meetings.
- Chief Academic Officer and the Superintendent met with every faculty in the district.
- Superintendent visited 123 schools.
- Superintendent met on bi-weekly basis with DCTA leadership throughout school year.
- Senior level district staff met jointly with Board of DCTA for first time.
- Called for and completed a third party evaluation of the district by the Council of Great City Schools.

Curriculum and Instruction:

- Hired a Chief Academic Officer, Jaime Aquino, who brings a track record of improved student achievement from New York City and Hartford, CT, and a strong vision for public education that is helping to shape Denver Public Schools.
- Reorganized the central office so that all instructional functions report to the Chief Academic Officer.
- Created eight Instructional Support Teams to provide dedicated and comprehensive instructional leadership to educators in all schools.
- Hired highly-qualified facilitators to provide teachers with job-embedded professional development in humanities and math/science.
- Reorganized the ELA Department to focus on both instruction and compliance.
- For the first time in DPS history, adopted a common music and arts curriculum for all elementary schools.

- Developed benchmark assessments in core content areas to help guide classroom practice over the course of the school year. Assessments will be administered three times a year beginning in the 2006-2007 school year.
- The Board of Education passed the toughest graduation requirements in the state of Colorado. The new requirements are aligned with college entrance requirements and will prepare Denver students for college-level work.
- Wrote planning guides to improve the delivery of literacy, math, science and social studies lesson plans. The guides are a tool for teachers to use to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all the students in a class and help reduce the amount of time teachers need to prepare for classes. The plans also include intervention lessons to help students who are not progressing as fast as others.
- Wrote and secured a \$1 million Teaching American History grant to implement a district-wide professional development initiative in American history. The project will serve one-third of fifth-grade teachers and all of the district's eighth-grade and high school level American history teachers.
- Worked toward embedding cultural competency and multiple perspectives in core curricula, by referencing strategies for teachers in the literacy and math planning guides and by selecting culturally relevant literacy and math materials.
- Modified the curriculum in core subjects.

Highlights of changes in k-12 literacy curriculum.

- New skills added to K-9
- New interventions added to elementary and middle school lesson plans
- New planning guides for K-9
- Use of double blocks schedules for students as needed

Highlights of changes in K-12 Mathematics:

- Emphasis on skills in elementary grades
- Additional practice and skills workbook for middle school
- New Algebra units for 8th grade
- New skills component for high school – Bridge to Algebra
- New planning guides k-9
- Use of double blocks schedules for students as needed
- Program selected for Algebra 2 field test
- Offered professional development strand for special educators teaching elementary math
- Require at least 90 minutes of daily math instruction for students who are below proficient on the CSAP

Highlights of changes in K-12 Science:

- Expanded field test of selected units of new elementary science program

- Second year of implementation of city-wide biology program
- First year of city-wide middle school science programs
- Field test of new high school earth science course

Highlights of changes in K-12 social studies:

- Standards matrix for elementary school will be introduced
- Shared non-fiction reading for elementary grades
- Field test in eight schools of a new middle school curriculum
- Field test in four schools of a new high school curriculum
- Design year for high school geography and elementary social studies

Highlights of changes in K-12 English Language Development:

- Developed new language allocation guidelines
 - Selected a new ELD program for all secondary schools
 - Restructured our delivery of mandated ELA training to include face-to-face interaction with an ELA specialist
- Provided after-school programming for students below proficiency in math, reading and writing through the DPS Success program. 558 teachers in 82 schools provided extra tutoring instruction in math and literacy to approximately 8,400 students.
 - Realigned professional development resources to create a Leadership Development Department. Developed a centralized professional development plan and calendar for administrative and teacher staff to address district priorities in the strategic plan.
 - Designed and conducted a two-week long Principal Institute for all current DPS Principals. The institute focused on addressing the instructional needs of all learners; using data to align state standards, instruction, and assessment; implementing exemplary pedagogical strategies to deliver rigorous curriculum in literacy, mathematics and science; supporting the building of professional learning communities; and leveraging the professional compensation system as a tool for improving instruction.
 - Initiated a redesign of the induction program for new teachers to include formal orientation and ongoing mentoring.
 - Worked with parents and community organizations to create a new standards-based report card for grades ECE to 8.
 - Established a Deans' Roundtable and University Partnership Team to strengthen the articulation between DPS and the institutions of higher education.
 - In collaboration with the Caring for Colorado Foundation, the Colorado Trust, the Denver Foundation, and the HealthOne Alliance, developed an intensive day program for students with emotional disabilities in grades 3-5. In the past, these students were tutitioned out of district programs.

- Began to establish in each school a comprehensive Resource to Intervention model to address the unique learning needs of all students.

Administrative Services and Human Resources:

- Passed ProComp by a vote of the citizens of Denver. ProComp is giving our faculty the ability to earn more for their contributions in the classroom, while linking the district's single largest expenditure to student academic growth.
 - In 2005, Denver voters passed the mill levy increase to fund ProComp, just one demonstration of our community's support for DPS.
 - More than 1200 educators enrolled in ProComp during the first two opt-in windows
 - Payroll cut the first ProComp paychecks with minimal errors, dispelling the fear that the administration couldn't handle ProComp.
 - DCTA and the district collaborated to refine ProComp's elements by capturing user feedback related to ProComp systems.
- Moved up teacher hiring calendar by 4 weeks, making DPS competitive with virtually every metro area district for the first time.
- Hired/placed 26 new Principals and 28 new Assistant Principals.
- Completed 90% of teaching hires/placements for the 2006-2007 school year (Note: includes both new hires and existing teachers who changed jobs).
- Realigned all non-instructional staff to report to Chief Operating Officer.
- Leveraged survey technology to begin collecting feedback on HR transactions.
- Created advisory committee on recruitment.
- Continued HR and budget automation project to improve productivity, reduce paper and increase accuracy of transactions.
- Published new job descriptions for principals and assistant principals. Began to incorporate expectations into professional development programs.
- Redesigned the selection process for principals and APs.
- Completed a significant upgrade of the Lawson HR/Payroll system.

Budget and Finance:

- Realigned budget and accounting staff to report to Chief Financial Officer, ensuring that all financial activities are consolidated and subject to the same scrutiny.
- Aligned district operating, mill levy and title fund expenditures with The Denver Plan.
- Conducted analysis of DPS budget to ascertain where fiscal pressures arise; identified declining enrollment as critical issue, along with under-utilized facilities.
- Drafted and presented Financial State of the District document to Board of Education and public groups.
- Eliminated the “head tax” approach to budgeting in schools.
- Moved up budget timeline by four weeks, allowing the hiring process to begin four weeks earlier.
- Enhanced the presentation of how school resource allocations were derived by delineating changes from the prior year.
- Reduced the restrictions placed on how schools can utilize their resources.
- The Board of Education adopted budget principles, to include aligning the use of district resources to district educational goals and strategies, eliminating reliance on non-recurring funds to support continuing needs, enhancing budget reporting practices, etc.
- Closed the district’s \$16.4 Million Budget gap by various measures, to include 15% in central cuts and a 2.4 percent reduction for schools

Miscellaneous:

- Initiated a redesign of Manual High School that intends to establish a premiere academic program for Manual students.
 - Established a partnership with a mentoring collaborative; secured funding to link 310 DPS students with mentors.
 - Collaborated with 36 community members, teachers, administrators, resource providers and students to create the Manual Academic Resource Center (MARC), which supports students transitioning to other high schools. The MARC tracks students, provides academic support, assists with course selection and new school registration, and provides access to college information.
 - Tracked and communicated with 558 Manual students through phone calls and home visits to ensure they make a successful transition into their new school.
 - Hosted Manual students at four community outreach events.

- Launched Infinite Campus, a new district-wide student information system.
- Created and are in the process of hiring 8 parent coordinators for the district.
- Closed high school campuses at lunch for most ninth grade students.
- Participated in Colorado Department of Education School Improvement Grant Process for the first time to evaluate low performing schools. Five schools have completed the evaluation process to date and another eight are scheduled for this fall.
- Created a partnership with Qwest Communications to establish an online safety classroom and certification program.
- In collaboration with Denver Health, we have increased the number of School-Based Health Centers with one at South (replaced that which was at Manual) and one at Kunsmiller.
- Established a collaborative partnership with Oakwood Homes that will provide Denver Public Schools employees with access to affordable housing.
- Influenced passage of House Bill 1240, which permits the state board of education to re-start the accountability clock if the local board restructures the governance and program of an *unsatisfactory* public school.
- Enrolled approximately four dozen Hurricane Katrina evacuees; schools raised thousands in cash to provide evacuees with clothing, backpacks, meals, bus passes and other necessities.
- Montbello High School and Hallet Elementary School were selected for the Channel 7 Makeover project; the project focuses on renovating existing Denver classrooms such as music rooms, art studios, computer labs and libraries.
- Amicably settled the North High School lawsuit, avoiding a two- to three-week courtroom trial.
- Implemented a new District-wide E911 system to allow police departments to identify the location of emergency calls.
- Completed fiber connections to every elementary, middle, and high school, for dramatically improved internet access.

DPS Foundation Highlights:

- New CEO hired to build infrastructure to build corporate, individual and foundation support for DPS initiatives.
- Secured \$750,000 to help implement the district's first Principals' Institute in June 2006 which provided leadership training to more than 130 DPS principals (a key component of *Principal Professional Development*).
- Launched the *School Partners Program*, a new initiative that connects DPS schools with area businesses.
- Awarded grants totaling \$658,000 for Lights On After School – the highest amount awarded to date – to 87 DPS elementary and middle schools in support of after-school programs that served approximately 8,500 students. This program is part of a partnership with Mile High United Way and the City of Denver.
- Raised over \$260,000 to ensure that 3,000 middle school students could participate in competitive after-school sports.
- Released a study in April 2006 that showed multi-year participation in quality, diverse after-school programs in Denver Public Schools positively effects student achievement and school attendance.
- Began development of the A to Z Fund which will help equalize opportunities among schools so that every student can access the same types of activities and events regardless of existing resources of external support.