

Denver Residents in Full Support of DPS Teachers and the DCTA Requests

February 2, 2019

From:

University Hills Neighborhood Association
Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO), representing 4,779 Denver residents

To:

Denver Public School Superintendent Susana Cordova: superintendent@dpsk12.org

Denver Public School Board Members

Anne Rowe: District 1 and Board President; Anne_Rowe@dpsk12.org
Barbara O'Brien: At-Large and Vice President; Barbara_Obrien@dpsk12.org
Lisa Flores: District 5 and Treasurer; Lisa_Flores@dpsk12.org
Carrie Olson: District 3 and Secretary; Carrie_Olson@dpsk12.org
Allegra "Happy" Hanes: At-Large; Happy_Haynes@dpsk12.org
Jennifer Bacon: District 4; Jennifer_Bacon@dpsk12.org
Angela Cobian: District 2; Angela_Cobian@dpsk12.org

Colorado Officials and Offices

Colorado Governor Jared Polis: <https://www.colorado.gov/governor/share-your-comments>
Lt. Governor Dianne Primavera: <https://www.tfaforms.com/426053>
Secretary of State Jena Griswold: administration@sos.state.co.us
Attorney General Phil Weiser: FB private message
Colorado Treasurer Dave Young: dave.young.house@state.co.us
Senator Robert Rodriguez: robert.rodriguez.senate@state.co.us
Representative Emily Sirota: emily.sirota.house@state.co.us
Colorado Department of Labor, Executive Director Joe Barela: 303-318-8017

Denver Officials

Mayor Michael Hancock: <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/mayors-office/contact-the-mayor.html>
Councilwoman Kendra Black: Kendra.Black@DenverGov.org
Councilwoman At-Large Robin Kniech: Robin.Kniech@DenverGov.org
Councilwoman At-Large Debbie Ortega: ortegaatlarge@denvergov.org

Hello _____,

As elected representatives of Denver's University Hills community, we write to express our concern and dissatisfaction regarding the current state of affairs in the Denver Public School (DPS) system. We fully support our teachers and other staff requesting changes to the DPS pay structure and we hope you will accommodate the requests of the Denver Classroom Teacher's Association (DCTA) to make the District's pay system more competitive and more predictable.

Low pay, complicated bonus structures, and disproportionately increased spending at the District's central downtown office is negatively impacting our teachers, our communities, and ultimately our children.

When compared to neighboring school districts and school districts around the country, our Denver teachers' base salary and overall compensation plan is unacceptably low – especially considering the high cost of living in the Denver area. According to CBS Denver's 2018 Colorado Teacher Salaries Interactive Map by Mark Ackerman, the average teacher salary in Denver is \$50,000 – compared to \$75,000 in Boulder, and \$66,000 in Littleton. Our Denver schools are losing good talent at a rate of 20% and our children are paying the price.

Detailed examination of the District's Budget Transparency Guidebook, published by School Support Services in April 2018, raises further concern as to where dollars are being spent. The disproportionate spending increases on DPS administration costs and central office personnel (that never see or work with our children) is irresponsible and needs to be corrected. We are alarmed with the proportionate level of dollars going towards the central office budget and we strongly urge you to make changes that move dollars directly back into our schools.

Competitive and predictable compensation for our teachers and other school staff directly impacts employee engagement, talent retention, the learning atmosphere, and our children. When DPS cannot attract and retain good talent, our schools and communities suffer.

If we do not address the problems before us, families will opt for other education options. Families that can afford it, will chose private schools – leaving behind families with less resources, thereby hurting the equity of our Denver communities. Other families will move out of Denver altogether in search of better public school options – negatively impacting the fabric of our Denver communities and the economy.

Beyond our Southeast Denver community, the majority of Denver voters support public education and our schools. In November 2018, 62% of Denver voters supported Constitutional Amendment 73 which would have increased spending on pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. It's clear what Denver citizens value – we value quality public education.

Lastly, as you make changes regarding the redistribution of DPS dollars, we ask that you accommodate these changes without making cuts to the school transportation budget or the school facility maintenance and upkeep budgets. (As we are all very well aware, many of our school facilities are already being maintained at bare minimum level.)

You have the power to improve the current situation. Our Denver teachers deserve predictable and fair wages. The importance of a teacher's work cannot be overstated. We fully support the requests of our Denver teachers the DCTA and we strongly urge you to accommodate their requests.

Please do what's right for our teachers, our communities, our children, and our society's future. Please urge the DPS bargaining team to invest in the pay system the DCTA has proposed.

Your next steps determine the outcome for our children, their future, the future of our city, and futures everywhere.

Respectfully,

Board of Directors
University Hills Neighborhood Association