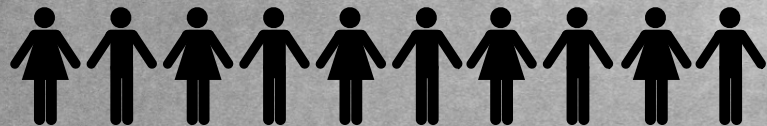


iYA BASTA!

Enough already. Southwest Denver schools have been ignored too long.

October 2014



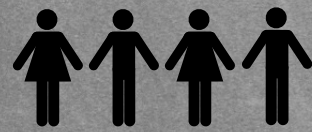
Of every 10 kids that start school in Southwest Denver...



5 students will be on grade level by 3rd grade.



4½ students will be middle school ready by 5th grade.



4 students will be high school ready by 8th grade.

Find out what YOU can do to improve Southwest Denver schools!



About one student will be college- or career-ready by 12th grade.

 We've updated our report to reflect the most recent data from 2014!



INTRODUCTION

For decades, students in Southwest Denver have been falling behind. Past community and district efforts to intervene have sometimes improved options for a few families. However, no efforts have yet been bold enough to successfully ensure all Southwest Denver kids receive an education that will give them the opportunity to successfully graduate high school and college.

The 42 schools in Southwest Denver (south of 17th Street and west of I-25 and Santa Fe) educate over 22,000 students, or about 27% of the entire Denver Public School district.

For every ten students that start school in Southwest, one student (about 13%) is likely to finish college in six years based on graduation odds from Colorado Commission on Higher

Education (CCHE).¹ Only about 19% of the schools in Southwest received an A or B according to Colorado School Grades. Most students fall further behind the longer they stay in low-performing schools. With another year of flat academic growth, the time is now for families to demand better options for their children.

This booklet provides information about the academic progress of kids in Southwest Denver, but it's not just about test scores. It is also about the lifelong prospects of the next generation.

We call on you to make a difference. We must all insist that children, no matter what their zip code, skin color, or income level, deserve an education that prepares them for college and a career. Now is the time to demand bold changes.

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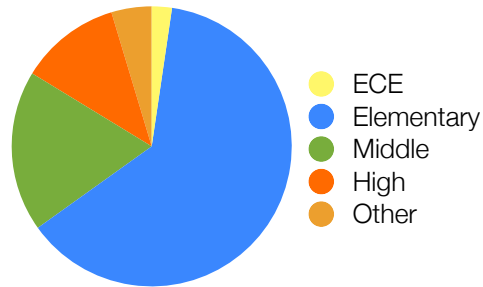
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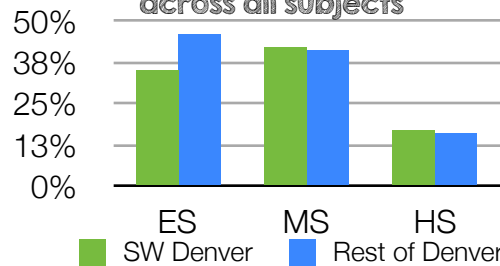


FAST FACTS

Schools in Southwest Denver by Grade Level



Maximum % of students proficient across all subjects



- There are **42 schools** in Southwest Denver.
- Almost **90%** of students are low-income.
- About **84%** of students are Latino.
- The average ACT score is a **16** out of 36.
- Only **110 juniors** were college-ready in 2013.
- At least **83%** of Southwest students are not proficient across all subjects.
- Only **four schools** were rated Distinguished (blue) on the School Performance Framework (SPF) scale.
- For every **two** available seats at an A or B school, **five** students tried to choose in.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Southwest high schools have been struggling in recent years. While the average graduation rate has increased, academic achievement is still deplorable. Eight out of ten high school kids in Southwest attend a school graded C or D by Colorado School Grades.

COLLEGE AND WORK READINESS

While 36.7% of people in Colorado have a college degree, and 40% of Denver residents do, approximately 13% of Southwest students are likely to earn one.

Among the benefits of a college education are increased lifetime earnings and better prospects of finding a job in an economic downturn. A college education is worth about \$1 million more than a high school degree over a lifetime. In 2013, the national unemployment rate for high school graduates was 7.3%, compared to 3.4% for college graduates. It has been projected that by 2020, 65% of all jobs nationwide will require postsecondary education.² Kids in Southwest are unlikely to get these jobs.

Most Southwest Denver students are not prepared for college. During their junior year, 37% of Southwest students will score 15 or below on the American College Test (ACT). An ACT score of 15 is not high enough for military training, let alone the vast majority of colleges.³ According to the ACT, a score of 21 is needed to be successful in college. In 2013, just 15% of kids in Southwest scored 21 or better. As a point of reference, the average ACT scores for accepted students at Colorado universities and

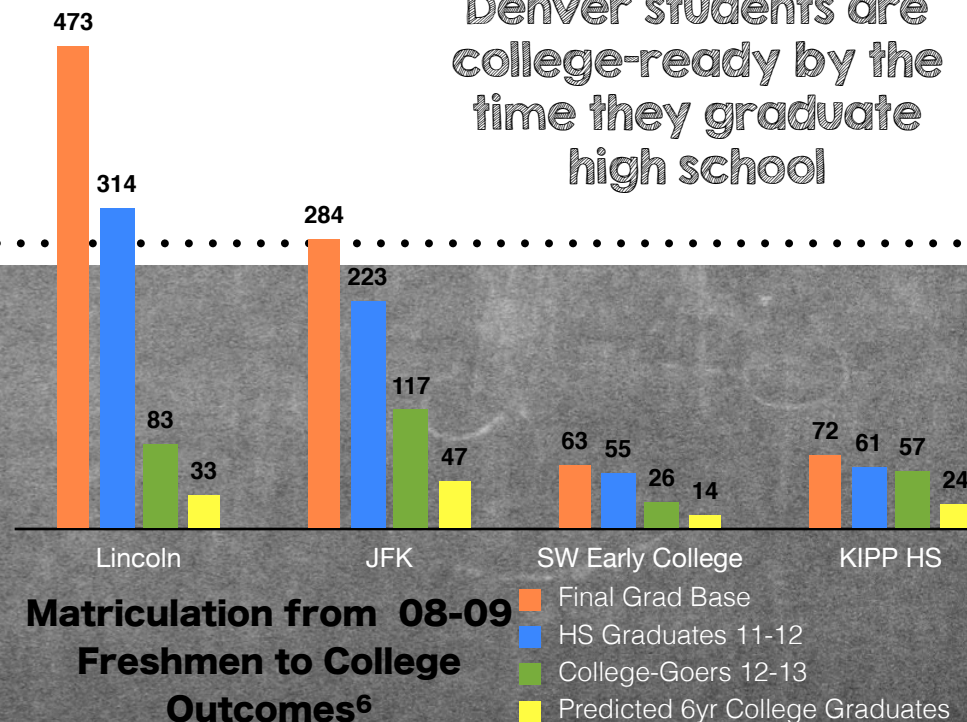
colleges are: University of Colorado - 27; Colorado State University - 22; University of Colorado, Denver - 21; Colorado College - 30; and Metro State - 19.

A college degree matters, and so does the college a child attends. Over the last three years, Lincoln, Kennedy, and KIPP high schools combined sent just nine kids to the nation's top colleges.⁴ At East High School, eight miles from Lincoln, 155 students were admitted to the same schools over the same time span.

Remediation rates are another issue for students graduating high school in Southwest Denver. Remediation rates refer to the percentage of students who enter college but are underprepared and must pay for non-credit-bearing classes. Approximately 60% of Kennedy's and 86% of Lincoln's college-goers will take at least one remedial class.⁵

86% of Lincoln grads that attend college will require at least one remedial class

Only 15% of Southwest Denver students are college-ready by the time they graduate high school



(1) **The School Performance Framework (SPF)** is a district tool that takes many factors into account (such as parent satisfaction and student engagement), but relies heavily on the degree to which students are improving each year (growth) and the number of kids on grade level. The SPF rankings: On Probation (red), On Priority Watch (orange), On Watch (yellow), Meets Expectations (green), and Distinguished (blue).

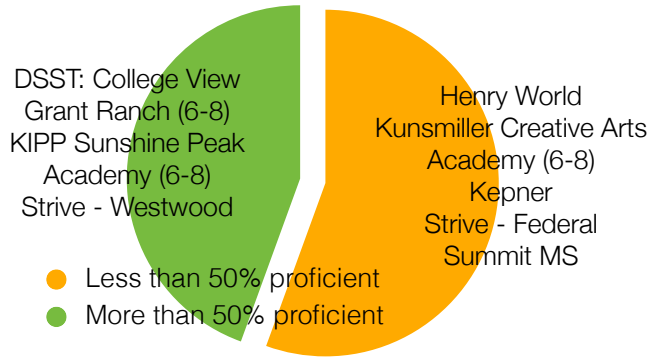
(2) **ColoradoSchoolGrades.com** is a nonprofit website that rates schools based on both student improvement and proficiency, placing more weight on grade level proficiency and setting a higher bar than the SPF.

(3) **Proficiency** refers to the percentage of kids on grade level, or on track to be college-ready.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Until recently, Southwest middle schools were among the worst in the city. Now there are four schools where more than 50% of students are on grade level. However, over half of the middle school students in Southwest Denver attend the three lowest performing middle schools: Kepner, Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy, and Henry World. These schools may have some great programs and teachers, but they aren't ensuring kids are on track to succeed in college.

Middle Schools by Proficiency

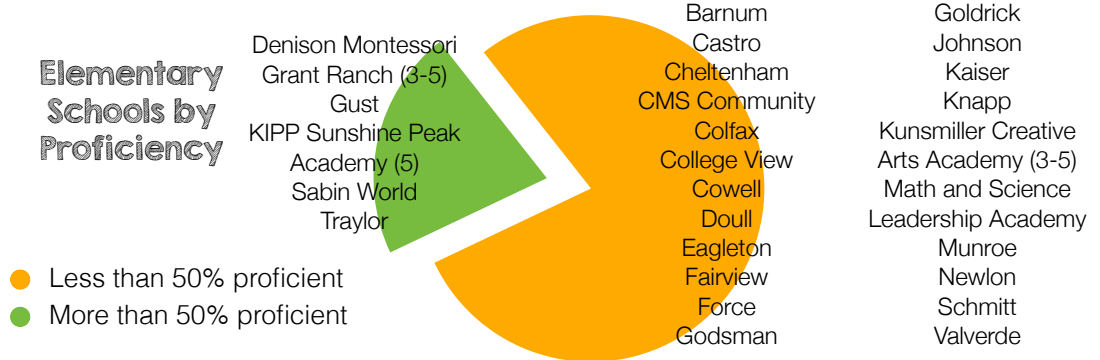


ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Elementary school lays the foundation for future academic growth. The vast majority of students that are not reading at grade level in third grade will never catch up. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, reading by the end of third grade can be a make or break benchmark for children because after the third grade they must use their reading skills to learn other subjects.⁷

Elementary schools make up the majority of Southwest Denver schools but their quality is varied. At some schools, like Traylor and Grant Ranch, 6 out of 10 kids are on grade level while just 2 out of every 10 kids are on grade level at other schools. Fifty-seven percent of kids in Southwest Denver are not on grade level, compared to 45% of the rest of Denver's elementary students. This high number is particularly alarming given that once a student is behind, he or she is likely to fall further behind every year.

Elementary Schools by Proficiency



- KIPP, STRIVE, Grant Ranch, and DSST offer over 1,500 Distinguished (blue) and Exceeds Expectations (green) seats where more than half of the kids are on grade level.
- The majority of students at Denison Montessori, Grant Ranch, Gust, Kaiser, Traylor, and Sabin World are on grade level -- demonstrating that both charter and traditional schools can provide a great public education. Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy is also the only DPS non-audition arts school and offers a wide array of music, dance, and visual and performing arts classes.
- Denver Scholarship Foundation, Daniels Fund, Boettcher Foundation, KIPP Through College, College Summit, and others are increasing the odds that low-income and first generation college attendees will complete their degree.
- The Education Trust's *Intentionally Successful: Improving Minority Student College Graduation Rates* report states that US Latino college enrollment at four-year schools went up by 22% between 2009 and 2011. Non-Hispanic white students' enrollment during the same timeframe increased by 2.7%.⁸

THE GOOD NEWS



CALL TO ACTION



Now is the time for parents to demand renewed attention to Southwest Denver so that every family has the option to send their child or children to an excellent school. With the completion of the revised Denver Plan and the district's refocused efforts on regional improvements, parents have a unique opportunity to renew their call for the rich academic options their children deserve. Community meetings, letters, and calls to school board members are all ways for parents to raise concerns about access to quality schools in Southwest Denver.

If parents do not demand better schools, nothing will change.

Be Heard

Your voice is important. A conversation has been started around one middle school in Southwest Denver, but now is the time to make sweeping changes to multiple schools where students are falling behind. Tell your elected officials what kind of public education you want for your community. Numerous meetings will be held in Southwest Denver in coming weeks. A calendar can be found online at <http://communityrelations.dpsk12.org/regional-community-meetings/southwest/> or by calling the DPS Office of Community Engagement at 720-423-2070.

The DPS School Board members are the primary decision-makers for Southwest schools. They hold public comment sessions to listen to citizens share their views about matters currently under consideration by the board. In order to address the board, you must sign up to speak. To do so, please call the board office at 720-423-3210 by 5:00 p.m. the day before the public comment session.

Who to contact?

Central Office	Email
Verónica Figoli, Chief Officer, Family and Community Engagement	veronica_figoli@dpsk12.org.org
Tom Boasberg, Superintendent	superintendent@dpsk12.org
DPS School Board Members	Email
Arturo Jimenez, District 5 representative	jimenez.arturo72@gmail.com
Rosemary Rodriguez, Secretary and District 2 representative	rosemary_rodriguez@dpsk12.org
Happy Haynes, President and At-Large representative	happy_haynes@dpsk12.org
Barbara O'Brien, At-Large representative	barbara_obrien@dpsk12.org

What should I say?

Here are a few starting questions to begin the conversation:

- With fewer than half of the kids at most of the schools in Southwest Denver on grade level, how will the district intervene?
- When will these changes take place?
- What can I do to support change and make my voice heard?
- How will you ensure that all kids are prepared for college?



CONCLUSION



It is critical that our schools be designed to begin preparing students for college at a very young age so they will be successful if they choose to go on to college or other challenging postsecondary opportunities. We need more than just excellent teachers in every classroom. We need intentional and personalized school designs that are structured to catch kids up and graduate them college-ready.

Southwest students deserve a better education. We need to act now. The longer we wait, the more students miss out on the opportunities they deserve. There are great things happening in many Southwest schools.

Now is the time to expand what's working well and address areas where we are having the greatest challenges. Your child deserves a five-minute phone call.

Acknowledgements

Contributors to this report include: Marco Antonio Abarca, Sari Levy, Aimee Martinez, Van Schoales, Jen Walmer, Mateos Alvarez, and Sonja Semion.

Thank you to Colorado Succeeds for developing Colorado School Grades, DPS for providing feedback and data, and Brian Lehman for the map visualization.

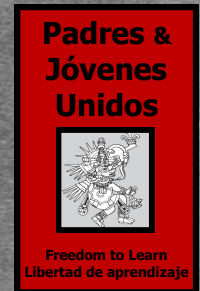
Thank you for reading! For more information visit:

APlusDenver.org/SouthwestDenver

For inquiries about this report contact
A+ Denver at admin@aplusdenver.org

ABOUT US

This briefing was produced by a coalition of nonprofit organizations working to improve public education.



	School	SPF	Average % Proficiency	CO School Grades
Elementary Schools	Barnum	Green	48.5	D
	Castro	Yellow	34.5	C
	Cheltenham	Red	32.1	D
	Colfax	Green	37.8	C
	College View	Green	46.5	C
	Cowell	Yellow	35.2	C
	CMS Community School	Red	29.9	C
	Denison Montessori	Green	55.3	B
	Doull	Green	39.5	C
	Eagleton	Yellow	38.0	D
	Fairview	Red	30.0	D
	Force	Green	41.2	C
	Godsman	Green	46.5	C
	Goldrick	Orange	43.2	D
	Grant Ranch ECE-8 School (ECE-5th grade)	Green	63.8	C
	Gust	Green	57.8	B
	Johnson	Green	33.9	C
	Kaiser	Green	49.9	C
	KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy (5th grade only)	Blue	52.7	C
	Knapp	Green	43.7	C
	Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy	Yellow	35.6	C
	Math and Science Leadership Academy	Yellow	37.3	C
	Munroe	Yellow	43.6	D
	Newlon	Green	48.2	B
	Sabin World	Green	54.4	C
Schmitt	Red	39.0	C	
Traylor Academy	Green	63.4	C	
Valverde	Red	27.8	F	
Middle Schools	DSST College View	Blue	58.4	A
	Grant Ranch ECE-8 School (6th-8th grade)	Green	65.8	B
	Henry World School	Orange	44.0	C
	Kepner	Red	20.5	D
	KIPP Sunshine Peak Academy	Blue	58.4	A
	Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy	Yellow	40.1	D
	STRIVE - Federal	Green	47.0	B
	STRIVE - Westwood	Blue	52.1	A
Summit MS	Red	11.9	N/A	

	Schools	SPF	Average proficiency %	CO School Grades	ACT Ave.	College-going Rate
High Schools	Abraham Lincoln	Orange	17.6	D	15.6	35%
	Florence Crittenton	Yellow	22.3	C	14.5	No data
	John F. Kennedy	Yellow	36.0	C	17.5	57%
	KIPP Collegiate	Green	44.1	B	18.1	90%
	Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy	Yellow	41.8	NA	No data	No data
	Southwest Early College	Orange	31.1	D	16.1	47%
	STRIVE SMART Academy	Yellow	43.2	NA	No data	No data
	Summit	Red	13.6	F	15.3	No data

Cover Data Sources:

1. About 2,100+ Kindergartners begin in Southwest Denver
2. 46.5% of those kids are on grade level by 3rd grade (~966), CDE data lab (in school calcs) for schools south of 17th street and west of Santa Fe
3. 42.9% by 5th grade (861), *ibid*
4. 39.9% by 8th grade (756), *ibid*
5. 110 of those students scored 21+ on their ACT--an indicator of college- and work-readiness. (15%) *Used 2013 ACT data scores from CDE

Endnotes

1. Colorado Commission on Higher Education. (February 2012). '2011 Legislative Report on Remedial Education.' Colorado Department of Higher Education. Retrieved from http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Remedial/FY2011/2011_Remedial_refeb12.pdf (For more info, see endnote 6).
2. Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. (June 2013). 'Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020.' Georgetown University. Retrieved from <http://cew.georgetown.edu/recovery2020>
3. ASVAB. 'Career Exploration Program.' Retrieved from http://redfield.k12.sd.us/high_school/scholarships/ASVAB%20to%20ACT%20score%20conversion.pdf
4. Pending A+ Denver Report, using CDHE matriculation data and US News' college ranking. SW Early College was excluded from this calculation because of the school model, which offers college courses during high school.
5. Chalkbeat. (2013). 'Find your high school's remediation rate.' Retrieved from <http://co.chalkbeat.org/2013/04/16/find-your-high-schools-remediation-rate/>
6. 118 students are projected to graduate from college(within six years), out of 894 starting freshmen in 2008-09 (about 13%) based on CCHE's remediation report that states that 30% of college-goers who don't need remediation and 9% of those who do will graduate from college. Based on CCHE's remediation report that states that 60% of college-goers who don't need remediation and 30% of those who do will graduate from college. Also note, 2012-13 college enrollment data was the most recent data available for Lincoln, JKF, and SW Early College; we used 13-14 enrollment data for KIPP as no previous data was available.
7. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). 'Learning to Read.' Retrieved from <http://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/9013/8262/2751/AECFReporReadingGrade3.pdf>
8. Yeado, Joseph. (2013). 'Intentionally Successful.' Education Trust. Retrieved from http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Intentionally_Successful.pdf

If you have further questions about our data, please email admin@aplusdenver.org or visit www.aplusdenver.org