

2017 CANDIDATE SURVEYS  
**DENVER PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**



# **Denver School Board District 3: Central**



# DPS DISTRICT 3 - INTRODUCTION

School board elections offer community members the opportunity to reflect on the state of their public schools and make a choice on a vision for the future. A+ Colorado believes that understanding who the candidates are, what they stand for, and their qualifications is critical if Denver Public Schools is to meet its vision of *Every Childs Succeeds* and the ambitious goals of the Denver Plan 2020.

The purpose of this survey is to give Denver voters a clear picture of where each candidate stands on the most important issues that the board oversees. All registered candidates were invited to complete the survey. Answers are published exactly as received.

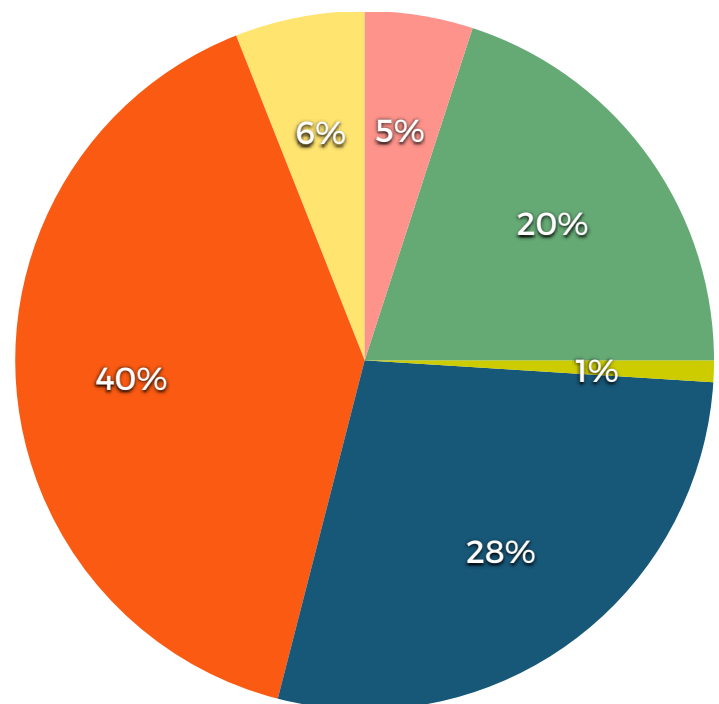
<b>Student Demographics SY 2016-17</b>	
PK-12 Students	10,093
% Free and Reduced Lunch	52%
% English Language Learners	23%

<b>% Students Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Expectations (2017)</b>	
English Language Arts (ELA)	59%
Math	31%

<b>2016 Graduation Rate</b>	
District Overall	67%
District 3	47%
District 3, Excluding *AECs	87%

\*Alternative Education Campuses

**District 3 Student Race/ Ethnicity SY 2016-17**



- Asian
- Black/African American
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races

# PART 1: DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIES AND GOALS

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

	Mike Johnson	Carrie Olson
The district's current strategic plan (the Denver Plan 2020) is the right focus for DPS to improve outcomes for all students.	4	NR

NR = No Response

## 1.1 What might you change in the Denver Plan 2020? How will you hold the district accountable to meeting the goals of the Denver Plan, or to improving student outcomes more broadly?

**Mike Johnson:** If we were writing the plan today, I would add language to the college and career ready goal focused on expanding career and technical education and apprenticeships. I would add a specific commitment to expanding and improving the district's community outreach, an area in which we still have a long way to go. I also would add a commitment to financial transparency. We've made progress with the detailed school-by-school budgets that is posted on the district website but there is still room for more improvement.

I will hold the district accountable by continually pushing my fellow board members and staff to focus our time and resources on meeting the goals of the Denver Plan and improving student outcomes. And I know the Denver community will hold the board accountable through the ballot box.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

## PART 2: TEACHING, LEADERSHIP, AND LEARNING

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4=strongly agree.

	Mike Johnson	Carrie Olson
Teachers and school leaders should be held accountable for student academic outcomes.	3	NR
The current compensation system (ProComp) is structured to address challenges in attracting and retaining teachers.	2	NR

### 2.1 How would you ensure the district is meeting the needs of traditionally underserved student populations (students of color, low-income students, emerging multilingual students, and students receiving special education services)?

**Mike Johnson:** 1. Encourage our best teachers and principals to work in the schools that serve traditionally underserved students by paying them more and by providing the additional supports they need to do their jobs.

2. Allocate additional resources to the schools and classrooms that serve these students. We currently allocate more money to schools that serve traditionally underserved students through student based budgeting, including, for example, approximately 30% more dollars to low-income students. We should reevaluate whether this is enough on a regular basis.

3. Hire more teachers who look like and can identify with our students. Several efforts have not been as productive as I had hoped but I'm optimistic that our new initiatives to help paras to become teachers and our CTE program to encourage DPS students to become teachers will produce results.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

**2.2 What do you believe is DPS' greatest challenge to having great teachers in every classroom? How do you suggest the district enhance or change its approach to this challenge?**

**Mike Johnson:** One of the greatest challenges is stretching our limited resources (Colorado is in the bottom 10 in school funding nationally) to pay teachers more, especially young teachers. Another challenge is finding more time for teachers to plan and to work together in teams to improve student learning. Our new teachers' contract increases teacher pay some, but not as much as I would like. Our teacher leadership and collaboration program expands opportunities for teachers to work together in teams, but they need more. The long term solution has to include more money from the state, either by a reallocation of more money to education in the current state budget or from a new revenue source.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

## PART 3: SCHOOL QUALITY

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

	Mike Johnson	Carrie Olson
All families should have the choice to send their students to a school that meets their needs.	4	NR
In 2016, the DPS School Board adopted the School Performance Compact, a policy outlining that schools that are persistently low performing (this year, schools that have been red on the SPF for two consecutive years, or have been red or orange for 3 consecutive years) are eligible for replacement, restart, or closure. Do you agree with this policy?	4	NR
DPS adequately engages families and community members throughout the school turnaround process.	3	NR

**3.1 How should the district define a “high quality” school? What do you like about the current system to capture school performance (the School Performance Framework (SPF))? What, if anything, would you change about how the district measures and communicates a school’s performance?**

**Mike Johnson:** The SPF is a good starting point. I support its emphasis on academic growth over status because growth measures how much students are learning regardless where they start, whereas status largely measures the student’s socio-economic status and the education level of their parents. I also support the recent changes that force schools to focus on traditionally underserved populations in order to achieve a green or blue rating.

I’d like the SPF to include more measurements of school culture such as the results of the survey from our whole child work that asks students how welcoming their school’s culture is for them and students like them and whether they feel there are adults in the building who will listen to and help them when they need it.

With respect to the communication of results, I’d like to see more emphasis on sub-scores on, for example, growth, status and as mentioned above better measurements of school culture, and less emphasis on the overall school rating.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

**3.2 Research shows that Denver has seen a growing trend of school resegregation. What do you see as the cause of this trend and what would you do as a school board member, if anything, to address this issue?**

**Mike Johnson:** This is a tough nut to crack because we live in a city in which our neighborhoods are increasingly more and more segregated. Shared attendance zones, where students from different neighborhoods attend schools together, have reduced segregation to some extent. Choice preferences for free and reduced lunch students, which were pioneered by our charter schools and are currently being piloted in some of our least diverse district-run schools, also have helped. We also should consider locating more of our specialty schools in areas of Denver that are likely to attract a diverse student body. We recently created the Strengthening Neighborhoods committee to consider solutions to resegregation and other changes to our neighborhoods resulting from gentrification and other economic and social changes. Eventually, we may need to consider, as part of our Strengthening Neighborhoods initiative or separately, redrawing some of our current attendance boundaries.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

## PART 4: GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

	Mike Johnson	Carrie Olson
It is the role of a Board Member to hold the Superintendent accountable to student outcomes.	4	NR
The priority of the school district should be improving student outcomes in low-performing schools.	4	NR

### 4.1 What will be your two primary goals as a Board member? How will families & community know you are working towards these goals?

**Mike Johnson:** My two primary goals are assuring that we have high quality neighborhood schools for students in every neighborhood and that we provide a variety of educational options so that all students have access to a school that meets their needs.

Families and communities will know I am working towards these goals because I will continue the aggressive community outreach that, during my first four years on the board, led me to attend hundreds of meetings in our schools and in the community to listen to, update and answer questions from our families and community.

**Carrie Olson:** NR



**4.2 What were one or two decisions that the DPS Board made in the last four years that you strongly agree with? How would you work to support these policies?**

**Mike Johnson:** I strongly agree with the board's decision to adopt and aggressively pursue the goals in the Denver Plan. I strongly agree with board's decisions to allocate more resources and energy to the initiatives funded by the 2016 mill levy, including in particular the strong focus on early literacy, increasing the number of counselors and mental health professionals in our schools, increasing supports for and providing additional opportunities for teachers to work together in teams and expanding career and technical education.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

**4.3 What were one or two decisions that the DPS Board made in the last four years that you strongly disagree with? How would you work to change these policies?**

**Mike Johnson:** I agree with the decisions in the last four years. In the next four years I promise to push the board to build on decisions made in the last four years and

- improve the SPF by including more measurements of school culture;
- increase pay and supports for teachers who teach in the most challenging schools; and
- find a more effective way to attract and retain more teachers of color.

**Carrie Olson:** NR

# Denver Public Schools Elementary Schools by 2016 SPF

This map displays the locations of elementary schools in Denver Public Schools, categorized by their 2016 State Performance Framework (SPF) rating and their assigned board district. The map is color-coded by district: District 1 (orange), District 2 (green), District 3 (pink), District 4 (purple), and District 5 (grey). Schools are marked with colored dots corresponding to their SPF rating: Accredited On Probation (red), Accredited On Priority Watch (orange), Accredited On Watch (yellow), Meets Expectations (green), and Distinguished (blue). Major roads and landmarks are labeled, and a note indicates that schools without a 2016 SPF rating are not included on this map.

**Map Legend**

**SPF Ratings**

- Accredited On Probation
- Accredited On Priority Watch
- Accredited On Watch
- Meets Expectations
- Distinguished

**Board Districts**

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5

**Note:** Schools that do not yet have an SPF rating are not included on this map.

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# Denver Public Schools Middle Schools by 2016 SPF

**Map Legend**

**SPF Ratings**

- Accredited On Probation
- Accredited On Priority Watch
- Accredited On Watch
- Meets Expectations
- Distinguished

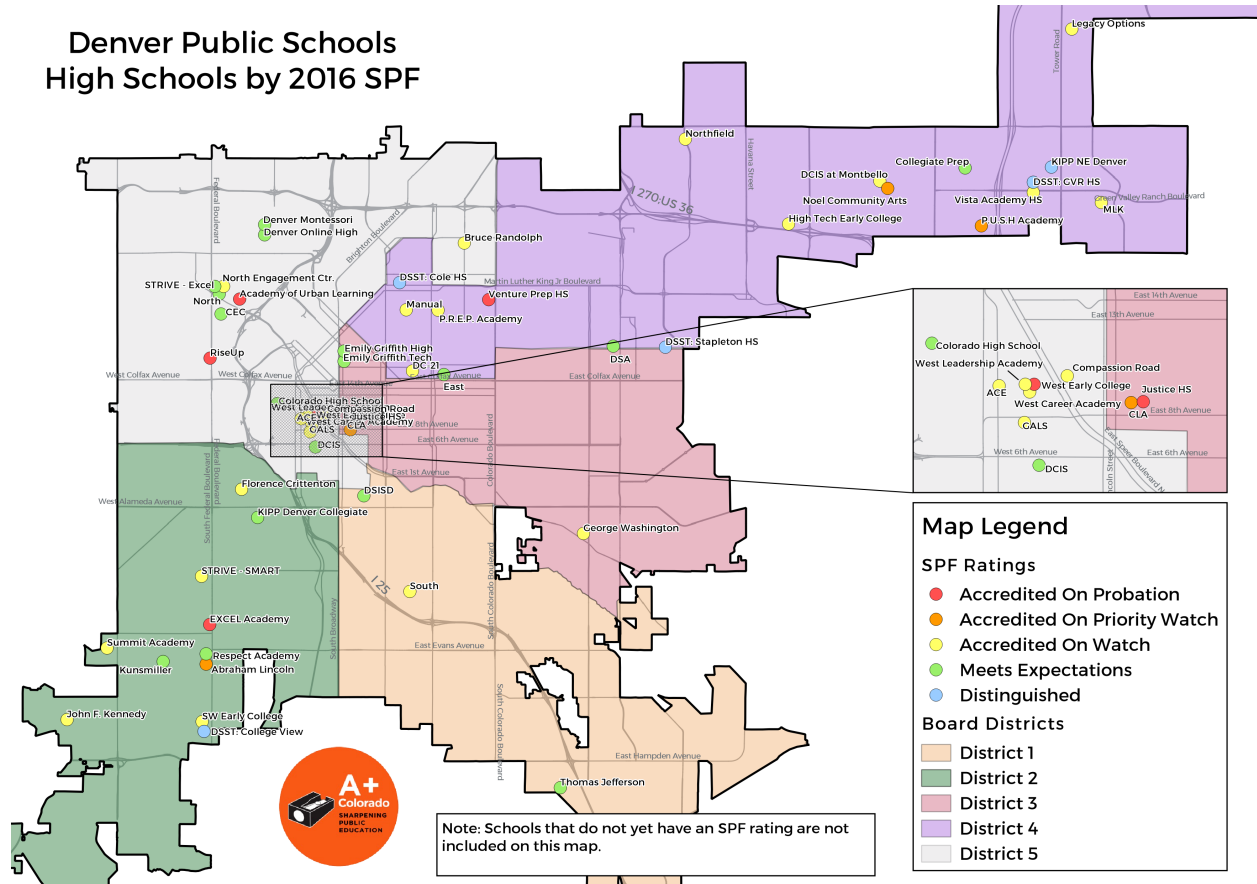
**Board Districts**

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5

**Note:** Schools that do not yet have an SPF rating are not included in this map.

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# Denver Public Schools High Schools by 2016 SPF



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