

DOWNTOWN DENVER EXPEDITIONARY SCHOOL



2017
2018

Annual
REPORT



It is a year of reflection as the school entered the 6th year of operation in August 2018. It is hard to believe but we will graduate our FIRST cohort of students that has been with us from kindergarten to 5th grade!

We are thankful for the school's continued strong enrollment and financial health as our neighborhoods continue to see declining enrollment in elementary schools. We have tremendous gratitude to our parents, the Downtown Denver community, and EL Education, who all partner with us to demand whole child education for students; education that measures success through academic mastery, character and social emotional development, and understands that young students are more than capable of high quality work that leaves the classroom and impacts the community.

In the last year our students performed at the Denver Center for Performing Arts, created climate change carols with beat boxers from Think 360, partnered with the city, Denver Public Schools, and So Gnar Creative to create a large public mural in the center of the city. Students learned from and with refugees from Emily Griffith Technical College, donated to and learned about the Hard Time's Writers Workshop with Denver Public Library for people experiencing homelessness, and took to the 16th Street Mall to save the honeybees. Did I mention that Governor Hickenlooper even declared June Pollinator's Month after kindergarten wrote him letters about the importance of the honey bees? Students partnered with the Alliance Center to hold public forums on environmental health, held Socratic seminars to discuss the impact of screen time on teens, and won a national grant from EL Education on their large scale Better World project through community impact. And for the fourth year in a row, second grade continued to study the impact of the light rail on Denver's community. They have advocated in public forums for affordable fares for students and low income riders. And guess what? The continued partnership with the Affordable Fares Committee paid off in August when RTD announced approval of a 70% fare reduction for student riders. And these are just a few of the 2017-2018 year student impact projects.

Our students are making real and lasting impact on the community they serve and on the community that serves them. And impact never has to be divorced from academic mastery. The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School continues to be rated a "green" school on the Colorado State framework and has grown in academic mastery point value each year. Last year, EL Education awarded the school credentialed status for continued high level of implementation and a comprehensive portfolio of support of all three measures of EL Education success. And not to mention, the time we spent in the outdoors. Last year, our adventure team completed over 28 camping trips and 14 day trips! That means from kinder to 5th grade each crew had 2 trips and a winter day adventure culminating with all of 5th grade, 84 students spending 5 days in Moab.

I cannot be prouder of the Downtown Denver Expeditionary School staff, students, and community as we work together together to define a neighborhood school as one where you may live, but you likely work (80% work in the downtown area) and that truly sees the city as campus. We have a hefty work plan for the following years and we have the right partnerships and staff to work together to do it.

Thank you for your continued commitment.

Letia Frandina
Executive Director

Meghan MacDonald
Principal

Board of Directors

Tara Manthey
Board Chair

Jessica Johnson

Jen Wood

Ja'Net Hurt

Cory Kalanick

Marissa Walters

Stephanie Perez-Carillo

Joey Pace

Enrollment Trends Since Opening

K-2

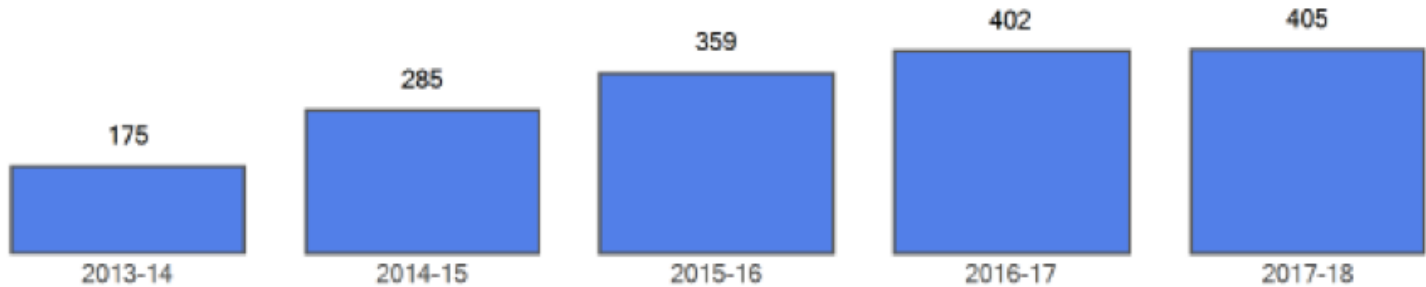
K-3

K-4

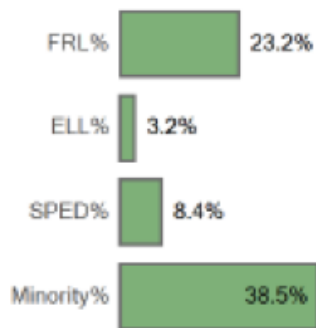
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K-5

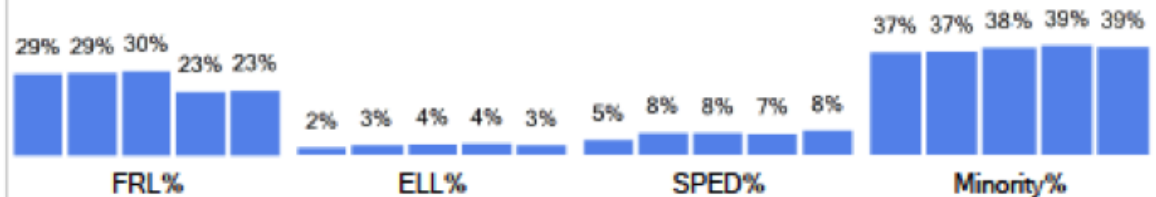
Five-Year Enrollment Trend



Current Year Enrollment

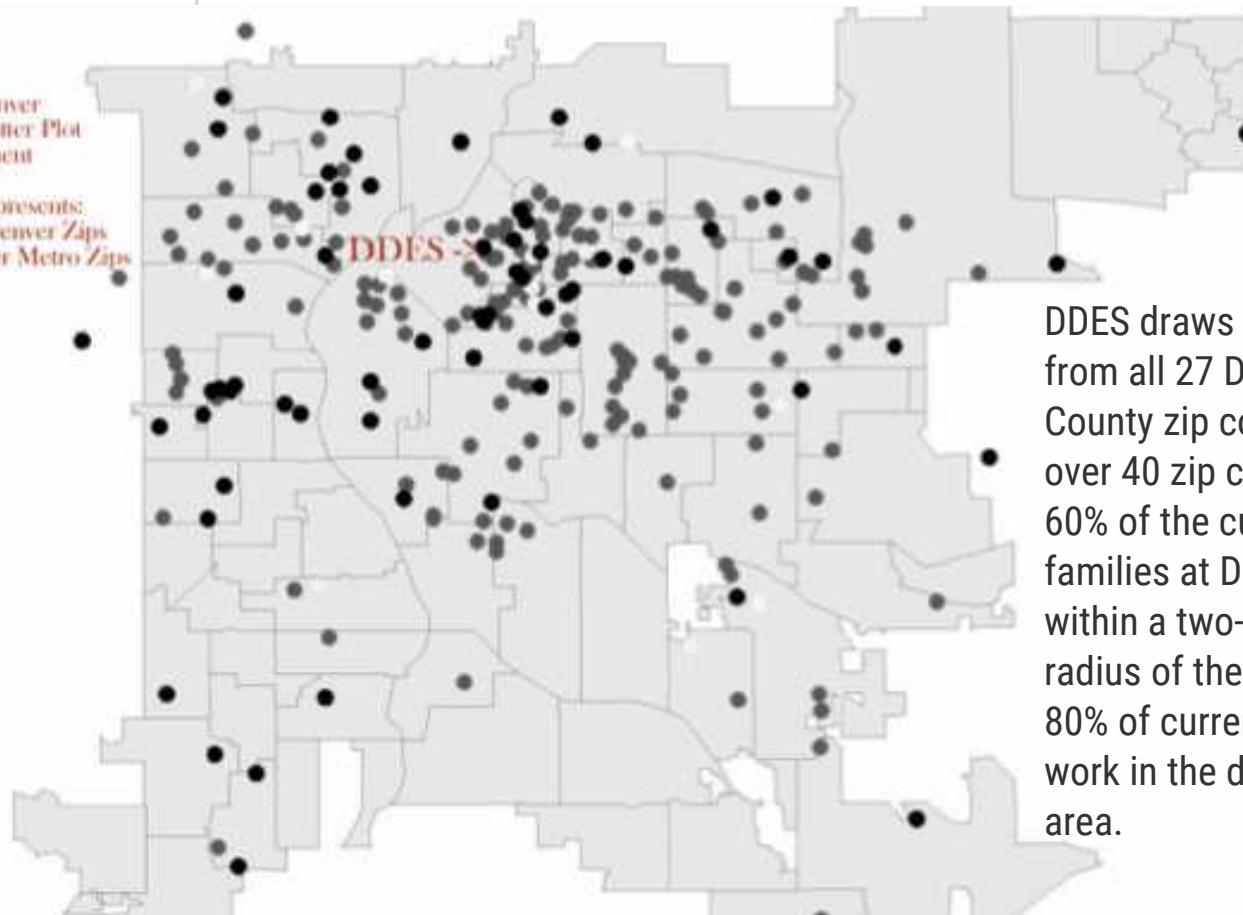


Five Year Enrollment by Demographics



City of Denver
DDES Scatter Plot
of Enrollment

DDES Represents:
27 of 27 Denver Zips
40+ Denver Metro Zips

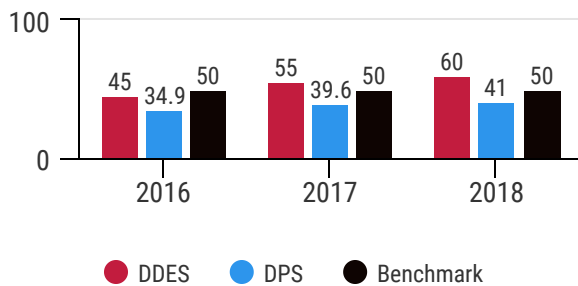


DDES draws students from all 27 Denver County zip codes and over 40 zip codes. 60% of the current families at DDES live within a two-mile radius of the school. 80% of current families work in the downtown area.

Academic Updates

At DDES, mastery of skills and knowledge is measured in numerous ways including benchmark tests (iReady (math), DIBELS (reading), teacher written assessments, student developed portfolios, and standards-based progress reports. The state releases ratings based on CMAS PARCC standardized testing and issues a rating. In September, the Colorado Department of Education released rankings and identified DDES as a "green" school (their identification for strong achievement), with a higher average percentage of achievement than in 2016-2017. Denver Public Schools (our charter authorizer) releases their own tool as well, the district school performance framework. Under state law, this district SPF replaces the state SPF for all DPS schools, creating a measurement system used only by DPS schools in the state. DPS uses many more measures than the state rating system and change these measures each year. This year DPS rated Downtown Denver as yellow (accredited on watch), a one-step increase from an orange rating last year. We do see our change in status on the district as an accomplishment, primarily because DPS raised the bar this year to make the community standards more rigorous for both CMAS (the state standardized test) and for the various assessments of early literacy. Downtown Denver was one of only 10 percent of all schools that increased in color rating even with the higher rigor.

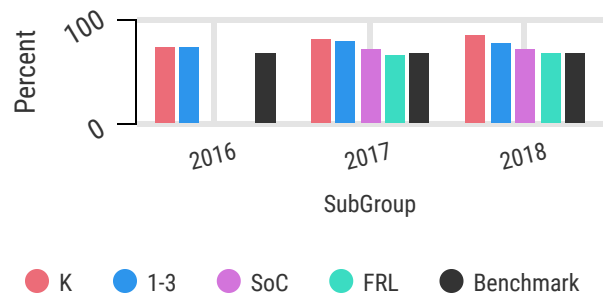
English Language Arts (CMAS) Status



We exceeded the benchmark in English Language Arts (ELA) in both status and growth for the state and district.

Our status with a similar demographic of population has increased significantly each year.

DIBELS (Early Literacy) Assessment



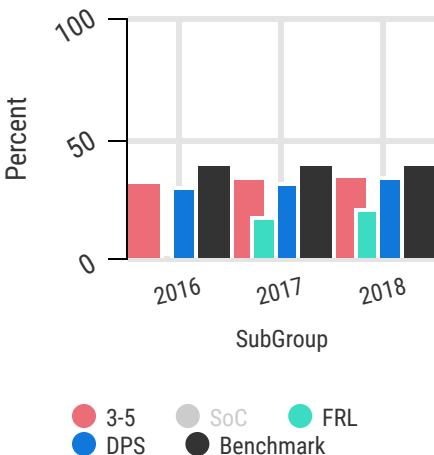
DDES exceeded all DPS benchmarks for each sub group (kinder - k, 1-3rd grade), Students of Color (SoC) and students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL).

DDES has the highest literacy data in all sub-groups since opening.

Our strong growth on our DIBELS reports, exceeding the benchmark for all subgroups, combined with our PARCC results, make us confident in the direction of our literacy and intervention programs. We are starting to find significant gains in closing opportunity gaps.

Our focus this year continues to be on Math. DDES did not meet expectations in Math and our status and growth has remained stagnant.

Math Status (CMAS)



Priority Moves

While DDES performed on average higher than DPS, we did not meet the benchmark for achievement for any of our subgroups. Our largest academic gaps confronting our equity goals are in Math instruction. Our growth in Math did not meet the benchmark.

Our strong math team returns for the second year. They spent much of last year helping rebuild the program and receiving some coaching on equitable instruction through Achievement Network. They enhanced communication with parents and developed stronger alignment with common core standards.

This year the focus is on intervention following our strong approach in English Language Arts. We have added a dedicated Math intervention block and a school-wide benchmark assessment iReady to continuously assess where students are and how we can differentiate better. Parents will receive more academic communication and reports on our Math instruction.

Teacher Culture, Retention and Diversity



51 of 57 employees completed an Organizational Health analysis by Workplace Dynamics Inc. DDES scored significantly above the benchmark in all four categories of org health: Being aligned as an organization, executing effectively, genuinely and meaningfully connecting with employees, and managing employees well.

Based on the results, DDES won **Top Workplace Award by the Denver Post** ranked sixth in top small businesses in Colorado.



THE DENVER POST



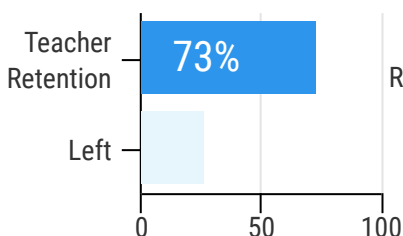
Researchers from three national universities focused on cities with a variety of types of publicly-funded schools. They surveyed full time teachers on teacher autonomy, teacher professional development, teacher-teacher trust, teacher-principal trust, principal instructional leadership, and school climate and teacher satisfaction.

DDES scored significantly above the district average in every category and received **the highest average rating recorded in overall autonomy and overall teacher satisfaction.**



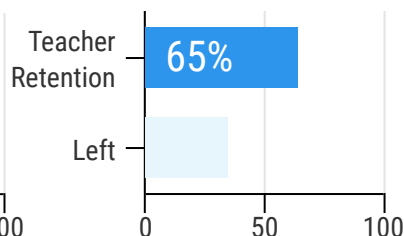
Downtown Denver Expeditionary continues to evaluate staff culture as a teacher recruitment and retention initiative. DDES also works to foster racial and ethnic diversity in our student population and in our school staff. While our lead teachers are still predominantly white, we have significantly increased recruitment and retention of teaching assistants of color working with all students daily.

2018 Teacher Retention



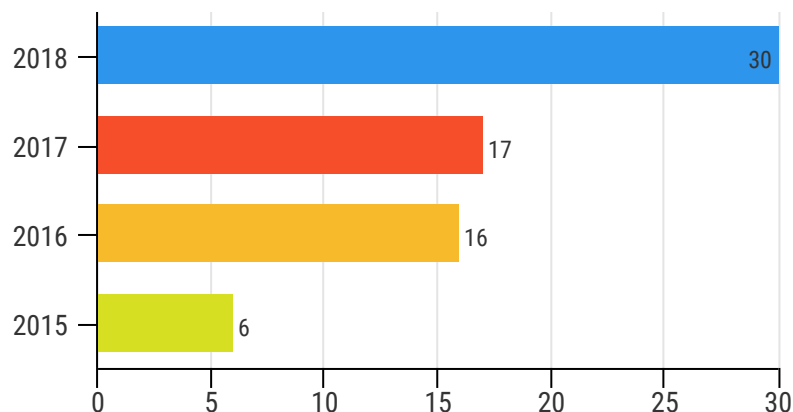
2016

2017 Teacher Retention



2016

Teachers and Teaching Assistants of Color



● By Percent Teachers and Teaching Assistants of Color

Community School, Community Impact

“ I like that our crew used so much tenacity because it was really hard to carry all that stuff in our backpacks. When we were walking to the train station, I kept thinking about how heavy it was with all that shampoo and stuff in there. But then I thought about how homeless people carry ALL their belongings in their backpacks. Every time I see a homeless person, they have a giant backpack on that's way bigger than mine. They must be really strong. ~Oscar, Second Grade ”



We don't leave our work in the classroom. We define high quality work as work that goes out in to the city, our campus, to learn from, with and about our communities. We believe whole-heartedly in Oscar's quote above, that our humanness must connect us and we see our communities from an asset-based lens. The Downtown Denver Expeditionary School is not your childhood elementary school experience. And we think that is a good thing.



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