

# Denver Public Schools

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## Press Release

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Board of Education Approves School Turnarounds, New-School Locations**

**Denver, CO**—The Denver Board of Education today approved a series of recommendations from DPS administrations for turning around six low-performing schools and for locations of new schools that are scheduled to open in the fall of 2010.

“The actions approved by the Board of Education tonight to turnaround our lowest performing schools create hope and opportunities for the students of Denver,” DPS Superintendent Tom Boasberg said. “We’re seeing progress in our system, but it’s not fast enough. We still have too many students who aren’t on track to graduate from high school ready for success in college and careers. We owe it to our kids—to all of our kids—to make the very difficult but necessary decisions to give them far better opportunities than they have today. We are grateful for the community input that has shaped these decisions, and we will continue to work closely with our communities to listen to their concerns, share information, and make necessary changes.”

In making the recommendations to the Board of Education, the district’s leadership looked at the last four years of student growth data on the School Performance Framework. The six schools recommended for turnarounds—three district-run schools and three charters—have each demonstrated student growth far below district averages over these last four years. The three district-run schools—Philips, Greenlee, and Lake—were the bottom-three performing schools out of the 130 schools on the district’s SPF rankings this year. The three charter schools—Northeast Academy, Skyland, and PS 1—are the three lowest-performing charter schools on the SPF.

Additionally, teams from the Colorado Department of Education performed an intensive diagnostic review on each of the schools. These qualitative diagnostics involve a week-long visit and conversations with school administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents and an evaluation of three areas: Academic Performance, Learning Environment, and Organizational Effectiveness. In each of these six schools, the CDE diagnostics emphasized significant shortcomings in each of these three major areas.

Below is a regional summary of the actions approved by the Board of Education at tonight's meeting.

## **Denver Board of Education Approvals: A Regional Summary**

### **Far Northeast**

- **Turnaround of Northeast Academy Charter School**—The Board of Education has approved an intensive school transformation initiative, including a comprehensive reorganization of the school's academic program, in consultation and partnership with an education-management organization.
- **Co-Locations of SOAR, DSST, Multiple-Pathway Center at new Green Valley Ranch E-12 Campus**
  - SOAR (charter school): Grades K-5 (over time); will serve 428 students at capacity; will provide a holistic educational approach with rigorous academic instruction and an extended school day; replication of FLI Academy in Harlem, NY—a proven model that has a school-wide proficiency rate of 85% in English language arts and 84% in math; plans to start with about 230 kindergarten through second-grade students in fall of 2010.
  - Denver School of Science and Technology (charter school): Grades 6-12 (over time); will serve 800 students at capacity; a liberal arts college preparatory school with a science and technology focus; replication of a proven model—the only DPS high school that is rated as “Distinguished” on the SPF and is the highest-performing school in the district; plans to start with about 140 6<sup>th</sup>-graders in fall of 2010.
  - Multiple-Pathway Center: Currently, the multiple pathways (or alternative options/transfer schools) in DPS are extremely limited for the district's size and difficult to access from some parts of the city; the center would serve students in grades 9-12 who are over age and under credit and have not experienced success in traditional high schools and/or are not engaged in traditional high school offerings. The Board approved a Multiple Pathways Center to open at the Green Valley Ranch Campus starting in 2011-12, and to open an additional center in the fall of 2010 in Southwest Denver, at a location to be determined.

### **Northeast**

- **Replacement of Philips Elementary School**—The Board approved that Philips be closed and replaced in fall of 2010 with Odyssey Charter School, which currently resides in Westerly Creek Elementary School. Philips' neighborhood students in grades K-4, will be offered seats at Stapleton schools (Roberts or Westerly Creek) or Park Hill for the 2010-2011 school year. Students who currently choice-in to Philips will return to their home school or choice to other district schools.
- **Closure of Skyland Charter School**—The Board has approved that Skyland's charter contract not be renewed. The majority of students live in the attendance areas of Manual, East, George Washington and outside the district. Better-performing options are available for those students in

these high schools, as well as in Colorado High School Charter and Community Challenge School.

- **Solutions to Stapleton Overcrowding**—Rapid growth in student demand requires provision of additional capacity; near and mid-term solutions were developed with strong community input and civic leadership, with a focus on high quality schools that reflect the diversity of the Stapleton ring community; relocation of Odyssey Charter School, construction of third elementary school, temporary ECE center in Westerly Creek facility, and boundary change with Philips will address capacity concerns for near and mid-term.
- **Location of Denver Language School at former Whiteman**—The charter school would serve about 470 K-8 students at full capacity and offer full immersion in Mandarin and Spanish; would open with about 200 K-2 students in fall of 2010.

### **Southeast**

- **Location of Denver Green School at former Fallis**—The Performance School will serve about 550 E-8 students at capacity; will implement a flexible, student-centered, standards-based curriculum that will emphasize hands-on and project-based learning with an emphasis on environmental sustainability; will open in fall of 2010 with about 240 preschool-2 and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Students who live in the Mayfair community portion of the Denver Green School boundary will have a choice preference to attend Lowry Elementary School for grades three through five and Hill Middle School for grades six through eight, until Denver Green School reaches full grade capacity.

### **Northwest**

- **Turnaround/Restart of Greenlee Elementary School**—The Board approved the administration's recommendation that Greenlee change from a ECE-8 school to a ECE-5 school and that a comprehensive literacy program be implemented for the 2010-2011 school year. Students currently in ECE through grade four will be able to continue at Greenlee next year without disruption. Students currently in grades five, six and seven will be offered seats at Manny Martinez Charter School, which will become a boundary school, or Dora Moore.
- **Turnaround of Lake Middle School and Co-Location with West Denver Prep #3**—The Board approved an amended recommendation on Lake Middle School. It includes the following actions:
  - Strengthen the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) at Lake International School;
  - Students currently in grades six and seven will be able to continue at the Lake International School in a combined IBMYP 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy next year without disruption;
  - The incoming Lake sixth grade class will be part of an IBMYP 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy program with a new principal who will have the ability to choose her own staff; this academy will be smaller and more focused and will grow one grade at a time over the next three years.
  - The Lake facility will become a shared campus with West Denver Prep School #3, which will begin operating with sixth grade students in the 2010-2011 school year.
  - There will be a common boundary for both the Lake IB and West Denver Prep programs, with families able to choose which program they want their child to attend.
- **Location of West Denver Prep #4**—The Board deferred a decision on location of West Denver Prep #4 for 30 days.
- **One-year renewal of PS 1 Charter School and replacement through the new-school RFP process**—The Board approved a one-year renewal of the charter school renewal. Because this school serves a significant population of students with special needs who currently lack a strong set of other educational options, the Board granted PS 1 a one-year renewal, and the district will replace the school through the RFP process with a new school that can serve the existing students in the fall of 2011

