

Denver Public Schools

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Denver Public Schools Secures up to \$25 Million Federal Grant *Grant to Support Linguistically Diverse Classrooms in Middle Schools*

Denver – Denver Public Schools (DPS) is one of 49 winners of the Investing in Innovation, or i3, grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of up to \$25 million.

A total of 1,698 entries were submitted for the \$650 million in federal grants available, and 49 winners have been named. DPS was the only the school district in the nation chosen to receive one of the top two award categories, which have awards in excess of \$5 million. Along with DPS' receipt of \$10 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for improving educator effectiveness and \$8 million from the Federal Government for expanding its innovative teacher residency program, this is the third major national competition that DPS has been fortunate to win in the last year.

DPS applied for the five-year validation grant in partnership with the University of Colorado at Boulder and Padres y Jovenes Unidos. The final amount is contingent on the district securing a 20 percent private-sector match by September 8.

The grant will fund the DPS proposal, the Collaborative Strategic Reading Colorado (CSR-CO). The mission of CSR-CO is to improve literacy and bi-literacy instruction and achievement in schools with high numbers of ELL students, which will implement strategies used successfully in linguistically diverse classrooms across content areas to address the linguistic and academic needs of English-language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities at the middle school level.

"We are thrilled to receive this innovation award. We know that we need to be willing to challenge the status quo, to innovate, and to think differently if we are to drive higher student growth and meet our goal of every student graduating from our high schools prepared for college or career. The grant is a wonderful recognition of our leading role nationally in education innovation," said DPS Superintendent Tom Boasberg.

"This innovation grant will enable us to significantly improve the reading and literacy skills of our middle school students, which is critical to preparing them for high school and ensuring they are on track to graduate. It will help us close the achievement gap and meet the educational needs of our English language learners. We are extremely grateful for the support of our partners, the Bueno Center at CU Boulder and Padres and Jovenes Unidos, in this effort," said Boasberg.

"We, in the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder, are tremendously proud of our partnership with Denver Public Schools and the ways our faculty and graduate students have worked together with dedicated teachers in Denver schools to address the needs of second language learners," said Lorrie Shepherd, Dean of CU Boulders School of Education.

The Investing in Innovation grant is part of the \$5 billion investment in school reform in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and will support local efforts to start or expand research-based innovation programs that help close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for students.

"We are committed to closing the achievement gap in the Denver Public Schools, and this i3 grant will enable us to accelerate our efforts with our English language learners," said Susana Cordova, Chief Academic Officer. "New resources provided by this grant will allow us to focus our efforts on improving instruction, support for teachers, school leaders, educational resources, assessments and parent engagement."

"We are excited to partner with DPS to continue our work to cultivate strong parental involvement in all facets of this work," said Pam Martinez, co-director of Padres y Jovenes Unidos. "Padres will play a strong role in engaging families in this work and ensuring they understand CSR strategies so they can be applied at home as we work to have all students prepared for college."

About 5,200 Denver students will be directly impacted by the project in eight DPS middle schools. Martin Luther King Jr., Early College and Merrill Middle School will be the first two schools to implement CSR-CO. Additionally, the five-year grant will fund additional mechanisms to support a coherent district wide implementation model and the formation of a national consortium to discuss and disseminate findings and support nationwide implementation of CSR for districts with growing numbers of ELLs.