

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR*

Denver Special Education Advisory Committee | Wednesday, November 3, 2021, 5:30 to 6:30 PM

Participants: Approximately 18

Languages: English

Below is a summary of the feedback from this listening session. It may not reflect the views of all participants and stakeholders district-wide.

What is going well?

- **DPS is listening to a variety of parent and community voices**
- **Students have access to technology to allow them to be successful (e.g, working on Chromebooks at home, accessing Lexia website for reading intervention)**
- **Special education students are often able to integrate socially**
- **Students and paraprofessionals provide strong supports for students**
- **DPS is establishing a vision for what student equity could look like for black and brown students**

What needs improvement?

- **Maintaining sense of urgency to improve student equity and safety**
- **Action on Inclusion initiatives, especially in middle and high school**
- **Inclusion which incorporates awareness of acceptance for individuals with disabilities, including their representation in the curriculum**
- **Teacher training around students with disabilities (e.g., attending the PEAK inclusion conference)**
- **Testing for students, especially for dyslexia**
- **Expansion of successful transition programs for students 18 to 21**
- **School leaders can play a larger role at creating an inclusive culture in their schools**
- **Currently, the DPS staff is not representative of the students it serves and experiences too much turnover**
- **Parents should be empowered to be knowledgeable advocates for their students with disabilities**
- **More accessible communications in sign language**
- **Pay for paraprofessionals**
- **Mental health and security need to be priorities and could be improved**
- **There are pockets of excellence in the district, but their knowledge and policies are not being shared throughout the district**

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Spread awareness of and advocacy for individuals with disabilities, especially their rights, history, and the existence of invisible disabilities**
- **Rebuild relationships with Black families and their communities by making them feel safe and following through on commitments**
- **Expand testing for disabilities, and consider utilizing the terminology *screening* instead of *testing* or *assessment***
- **Improve handicap parking and wheelchair access**
- **Use increased funding to improve and expand special education classes**
- **Work to improve mental health awareness for students**
- **Connect with special education students to understand their experiences and become more involved in their issues**

Notes: The comments with the most mentions or agreement during the meeting are listed in bold at the top of each column.

* While this event occurred after the formal end of the 100-day Listening & Learning tour, to honor the importance of the perspectives provided, this feedback will be incorporated alongside other reports on the website and shared with the Transition Teams.