

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

South High School | Tuesday September 21, 2021, 5:00 to 6:30 PM

Participants: Approximately 12 (including 2 students)

Language: 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 welcoming (esp. compared to neighboring districts)**
- **Diverse students and staff who welcome and value diversity in others (including gender, sexual orientation, personal expression)**
- **DPS is a values-based organization, so individuals are proud to be a part of DPS**
- **Strong leaders and high standards for leadership**
- **DPS is supportive of student voice and initiative**
- Positive Intention, focus, and initial steps taken to address equity issues, especially for students of color
- School choice allows students to find schools where they can access their individual interests
- DPS is large enough to "revolutionize education" through student-led and student-centered innovation

What needs improvement?

- **No required health class addressing sex education and social-emotional/ mental health**
- **More and better funded classes with practical and career skills**
- **More and better remote options; we have no good plan for waitlisted students who have not returned to school**
- **Within schools, classes are often segregated by race, income level, and language proficiency**
- **Many current practices do not align with commitment to equity, students first, and moving efforts forward (e.g., use of SAT exam, inequitable school funding, not bringing affinity groups together)**
- **The experiences and voices of loudest parent and students carry the most weight; not all parents and students are considered or served according to need**
- Lack of support for and retention of teachers of color
- Students are not adequately empowered to advocate for and take control of their education
- The demands of central office staff of school based staff are often unreasonable and out of touch; many have not been educators
- Vaccines are not mandatory for students

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Have central office staff spend time in schools so that their perspective and demands of school-based staff are realistic and school-centered**
- **Stay approachable and keep listening and focusing on student and teacher voice**
- Pay teachers more
- Improve student access to tests to diagnose learning disabilities
- Ignore the complainers on Facebook and Twitter and focus on organizational and personal values
- Be aware of the recent history and changes taking place in Denver
- Some initiatives have lost their original purpose and value and have become compliance exercises; bring them back to their original purpose and make them action-oriented
- Continue and increase sustainability and climate-action efforts

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