



SUPERINTENDENT DR. ALEX MARRERO'S

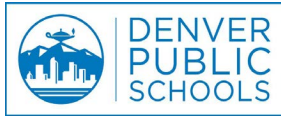
Listening and Learning Tour

Individual Meeting Summaries



Table of Contents

Denver Scholarship Foundation - July 14.....	3	Multilingual Education District Advisory Committee - Sept. 28.....	17
Latino Education Council - July 14.....	4	Warren Village (Transitional Housing for Students and Families) - Sept. 28.....	18
Colorado Black Round Table - July 17.....	5	School Safety Team - Sept. 29.....	19
Five Points Town Hall - July 24.....	6	The Salvation Army - Sept. 30.....	20
Meet and Greet with Coalition - Aug. 3.....	7	Manual High School - Oct. 1	21
Northeast Denver Innovation Zone (NDIZ) Far Northeast Families - Aug. 25.....	8	Middle and High School Students - Oct. 4.....	22
Urban Hike in Southwest Denver - Aug. 26.....	9	Elementary Students - Oct. 6.....	23
LGBTQIA+ Belong Group - Aug. 31.....	10	Athletics - Oct. 12.....	24
Vietnamese Language Community Meeting - Sept. 8.....	11	LGBTQIA+ Commission - Oct. 12.....	25
Black Family Advisory Council (BFAC) - Sept. 14.....	12	Central Office Staff - Oct. 12.....	26
Native American Community Meeting - Sept. 14.....	13	Families of LGBTQIA+ Students - Oct. 13.....	27
Cafecito - Sept. 15.....	14	North High School - Oct. 19.....	28
South High School - Sept. 21.....	15	George Washington High School - Oct. 20.....	29
LGBTQIA+ Student Group - Sept. 23.....	16		



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Denver Scholarship Foundation | Wednesday July 14, 2021, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Hosted by Nathan Cadena, Denver Scholarship Foundation

Participants: Approximately 35 (in person)

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?

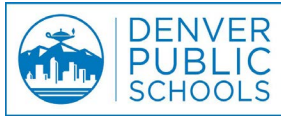
- Allowing for innovation and decision-making autonomy
- Committed and motivated leadership
- Diversity of schools with school choice options
- DPS Academic Division, led by Tamara Acevedo
- Effective teachers
- Increasing stability at schools
- Partnerships with external organizations
- Positive community connection and events (e.g., this event)
- The presence and influence of Ednium

What needs improvement?

- Addressing truancy and absenteeism through counseling
- Barriers between school board and the community
- Being open to outside ideas; learning from other districts
- Better communication about Choice options
- Communication (incl. news and events) with all community members
- Historical neglect of SW region
- Improving accelerated learning (incl. credit recovery and other options)
- Inclusion of non-English speaking stakeholders
- Lack of authentic engagement, listening to, and following through with parents and community
- Leveraging and valuing diversity (incl. language diversity)
- Leveraging student interests
- More cooperation and collaboration between schools

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Address falling enrollment and school budgets in SW Denver
- Be seen and present
- Bridge board and grass-roots views
- Don't compromise views and beliefs in the face of "loudest" voices (incl. from board members)
- Empower stakeholders to effectively contribute their voices and perspectives
- Find the good
- Leverage community supports to expand opportunities for students
- Meet and get to know students
- Observe and listen
- Support intensive accelerated learning (incl. credit recovery) in schools
- Visit schools (esp. Johnson Elementary)
- Work towards improved board dynamics



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Latino Education Council | Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 9:30 to 10:30 AM

Participants: Approximately 40 (in person at Servicios de la Raza)

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?

- Educators in the community want to support the school district

What needs improvement?

- Teachers and staff need to reflect student demographics
- We need to teach culturally relevant history, culture, and civics.

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Bring back Alma Project
- Collect data on school-level racial disparities
- Get to know community organizations
- Get to know the historical context of DPS and the Latinx community (e.g., West HS Walkouts, Congress of Hispanic Educators (CHE), Consent Decree)
- Make sure to include community voices prior to decision-making and planning (e.g, closing of small schools)
- Reach out to parents to encourage vaccination
- Re-engage parents & students who were disengaged during the pandemic
- Remove police/police-like presence from schools
- Review makeup of SRO working group



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Colorado Black Roundtable | Saturday July 17, 2021

Participants: Approximately 10 (virtual meeting);

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?

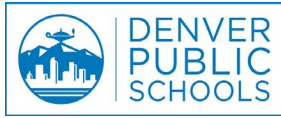
- Engaged parents
- Engaged staff
- Engaged stakeholders

What needs improvement?

- Community conversation about pedagogy
- Community conversation about school and organizational culture
- Community conversations about mental health
- Comprehensive strategic plan with key metrics
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Collaborate with other metro-area districts to address key issues
- Engage families in every policy and planning area
- Identify highest impact areas to work on
- Promote greater engagement and partnership with parents, emphasizing their role and impact in their child's success in school
- Resist the assault on Critical Race Theory (CRT) which is necessary for students' success in school and in life



SUPERINTENDENT’S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Five Points Town Hall | Saturday July 24, 2021

Hosted by Tay Anderson, DPS Board of Education At-Large

Participants: Over 1000 (Facebook, Zoom, and in person)

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?

- School-based health centers
- Strong technical foundation and response to enable learning during quarantine
- Community, students, parents
- Equity focus
- Teachers have been carrying the district
- Changes such as removal of DPD and reversal of pro-charter track
- Student Voice & Leadership and Student Board of Education
- Children going back to school
- DPS is great for white students
- Language programs in grade schools
- Know Justice Know Peace at MLK

What needs improvement¹?

- Improve communications
- Hire and retain more educators of color
- Get rid of LEAP
- Address institutional racism, white supremacy
- Fire district administration staff and shift resources to schools
- Give building leaders more autonomy
- Improve academic achievement for all students
- Provide supports for Black and Brown students to succeed
- Address gaps in supports for children with special needs; provide an inclusive education
- Address racial segregation, including busing issues

Advice for Dr. Marrero²

- Reorganize downtown, clean house at 1860 Lincoln, fire those who get in the way of change
- Redraw school boundaries
- Focus on equity means white parents giving up something
- Take proactive steps to retain Black educators
- Be in the community, listen to parents and students
- Be mindful of who you listen to; do your own research to understand DPS
- Hire more teachers
- Reduce class sizes
- Review the Choice data and you will understand what the community wants
- Address the trust deficit that goes back decades
- Reduce the number of overseers
- Meet with Black and Brown teachers

¹ Includes themes mentioned 3 times or more

² Includes themes mentioned 5 times or more

Note: The comments with the most mentions, likes, and/or applause during the in-person meeting are listed on top of each column.



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Denver Scholarship Foundation | Wednesday July 14, 2021, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Hosted by Nathan Cadena, Denver Scholarship Foundation

Participants: Approximately 35 (in person)

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?

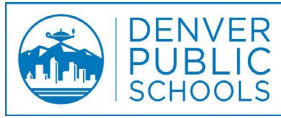
- Allowing for innovation and decision-making autonomy
- Committed and motivated leadership
- Diversity of schools with school choice options
- DPS Academic Division, led by Tamara Acevedo
- Effective teachers
- Increasing stability at schools
- Partnerships with external organizations
- Positive community connection and events (e.g., this event)
- The presence and influence of Ednium

What needs improvement?

- Addressing truancy and absenteeism through counseling
- Barriers between school board and the community
- Being open to outside ideas; learning from other districts
- Better communication about Choice options
- Communication (incl. news and events) with all community members
- Historical neglect of SW region
- Improving accelerated learning (incl. credit recovery and other options)
- Inclusion of non-English speaking stakeholders
- Lack of authentic engagement, listening to, and following through with parents and community
- Leveraging and valuing diversity (incl. language diversity)
- Leveraging student interests
- More cooperation and collaboration between schools

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Address falling enrollment and school budgets in SW Denver
- Be seen and present
- Bridge board and grass-roots views
- Don't compromise views and beliefs in the face of "loudest" voices (incl. from board members)
- Empower stakeholders to effectively contribute their voices and perspectives
- Find the good
- Leverage community supports to expand opportunities for students
- Meet and get to know students
- Observe and listen
- Support intensive accelerated learning (incl. credit recovery) in schools
- Visit schools (esp. Johnson Elementary)
- Work towards improved board dynamics



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Northwest Denver Innovation Zone (NDIZ) Far Northeast Families | Tuesday, August 31, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Hosted by Vernon Jones

Participants: 20 approximately (via Zoom)

Language: English, Spanish, and Amharic

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?

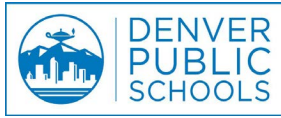
- Innovation zones are giving principals the support they need.
- Amazing teachers
- All schools can be independent
- We saw a lot of creative solutions during the pandemic; schools can learn from each other
- Leadership development has improved
- The teacher leadership process.
- The collaborative approach to support our teachers and community
- The ability to bring partnerships into the schools (e.g., mentors for students)

What needs improvement?

- Transportation (District and RTD)
- Overall communications do not consider the different schedules of the various schools/school types (e.g., some schools started a week before the official DPS date)
- Communication with students, a lot of messages only go to parents, and students often don't receive the information
- Improve partnerships (District and Zone)
- DPS is top-heavy; there are too many administrators
- Better allocation of resources
- The portfolio approach needs a learning agenda
- Articulate a more thoughtful set of high school options that meet student needs
- We used to be leaders; now we are followers

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Heal DPS: Denver is a community that needs a lot of healing. We need you to be the chief healer
- Transparency is critical
- Address transportation issues, so it is accessible to all students
- Take your time with this listening tour
- Meet people 1:1 to learn more
- There has been too much turmoil; buckle up and stay the course
- Think about what's best for our students, do not listen to just politics
- Sliceworks is the closest you will find to NY Pizza
- Must try Curtis Park Creamery



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Westwood Urban Hike (SE Denver) | Thursday August 27, 2021

Hosted by Milo Márquez, Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy, Research, and Organization (CLLARO)

Participants: Approximately 11 (in person)

Language: English & Spanish

Below is a summary of the details shared during his listening session. It may not reflect the views of all participants and stakeholders district-wide

Advice for Dr. Marrero / What Dr. Marrero Needs to Know

Context of Historical Policies

- Chicano activism with focus on education (beginning circa 1969) impacted the neighborhood.
- The neighborhood also became the site of some public housing projects.
- Neighborhood schools experienced the challenges of youth and student fights, which led to school resource officers (SROs) being placed in schools to address this issue but to also interact positively with the students.
- Many current adults from the neighborhood experienced bussing
- The neighborhood is currently perceived as a high-crime area.

Neighborhood Population

- The Westwood area in SW Denver became one hub of Denver's Latinx/Chicano population.
- Native American Population (i.e., Arapahoe and Cheyenne tribes)
 - The mid 20th century witnessed a policy of moving Native Americans from reservations to cities in attempt to "solve poverty"
 - Mexican and Chicano individuals tended to downplay indigenous heritage due to stigmatization (esp. from Mexican culture), but greater recognition of *mestizaje* and "meshing" or "bonding" followed from the Chicano movement to current times.
- The movement of Vietnamese population into Southwest Denver following the Vietnam war resulted in some initial tensions between communities.
- Current population shifts experienced in the neighborhood include gentrification, along with both tensions and commonalities between longtime residents and more recent immigrants.

Landmarks Seen or Mentioned

- **Schools:**
 - Pascal LeDoux Academy; Rocky Mountain Prep; Southwest Elementary; STRIVE Prep; Kepner; Kepner Beacon; Castro Elementary; KIPP Sunshine Peak Elementary
- **Other sites**
 - [J. Churchill Owen Boys & Girls Club](#); Denver's [Southwest Improvement Council \(SWIC\)](#) (mentioned but not seen); [St. Anthony of Padua's Catholic Church](#); Revitalized stretches of Morrison Road (Denver [Indian Center](#), Newer mixed-use developments (Del Corazon Apartments, Villa Paloma), future site of [Westwood Recreation Center](#) (City of Denver Parks & Rec); [RE:VISION Co-op](#)



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

LGBTQ+ Belong Group | Tuesday, August 31, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Hosted by Levi Arithson

Participants: 14 (via Zoom)

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?

- Belong Groups and similar programs
- Levi supporting our students and us
- Changes in pronoun options in Infinite Campus
- More acceptance of non-traditional families
- There has been a shift, so it is not just LGBTQ+ staff that take care of LGBTQ+ kids; it is everyone's responsibility
- Greater job protections for LGBTQ+ employees
- Seeing DPS at Pride is huge. Representation really saves lives
- Having Gay Student Alliance (GSA) at the schools is great
- DPS' policies are leading the way in terms of inclusivity for students and somewhat for staff
- The LGBTQ+ Toolkit has been great to inform other colleagues
- There is so much going well and we need to celebrate

What needs improvement?¹

- Students, staff, and families have experienced micro and macro aggressions; we need better ways to address this
- Better alignment of policies and implementation
- All educators need to address transphobia and bullying; some allow it, and some are afraid to deal with it
- In a public school system, religion should not be used as an excuse not to do this work
- We have equity classes, policies, and systems that address race issues, but education around LGBTQ+ is lacking
- Our strategy to retain and develop LGBTQ+ talent has to be intentional and long-term
- Trainings trigger PTSD
- Everyone should be responsible for supporting LGBTQ+ students, not just LGBTQ+ staff
- Use of pronouns is haphazard with higher-ups
- Inclusive healthcare policies
- Better representation

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- We have been getting messages about how our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) educators matter, we have not gotten the same message about LGBTQ+ educators
- Take a stand about what we (DPS) stands for
- I think you are here because you believe in our stories
- Make sure you listen to BIPOC, who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and experience multiple oppressions. Intersectionality matters
- Don't pay attention to transphobic parents. We exist; our existence is not up for debate
- District survey data of LGBTQ+ students and families are not sufficiently analyzed and shared
- Would like to see an official district rebuttal to the No Left Turn statements

¹ Statements which could identify individuals are excluded here, but will be part of aggregate reports

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Black Family Advisory Council | Tuesday September 14, 2021, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Participants: Approximately 65 (35 in person (including 15 students); 30 attending virtually)

Language: English

Below is a summary of the feedback from this listening session.¹ It may not reflect the views of all participants and stakeholders district-wide.

What is going well?

- **Current focus around equity (esp. trainings to dismantle systemic inequities)**
- **The Board of Education's Black Excellence Resolution and Know Justice, Know Peace (KJKP) Resolution**
- **Black Family Advisory Council (BFAC) strategic planning**
- **Some progress made towards improving Black student access to Gifted & Talented (GT) services**
- **Superintendent Listening Tour**
- **Efforts and progress with curriculum and student voice (esp. at Dr. MLK Jr. HS)**
- Long Black history in DPS with exceptional Black alumni
- Refugee inclusion
- Parental consultation and participation
- DPS libraries including representative and diverse literature

What needs improvement?

- **Greater Black representation in DPS employment**
- **More support of Black Excellence Plans**
- **More support of KJKP Resolution**
- **Underrepresentation of Black student in GT identification and access**
- **Police and security calls on students and lack of culturally sensitive, compassionate, and appropriate responses that do not criminalize students**
- **Overrepresentation of Black students identified as needing special education services**
- School climate is often toxic for Black educators
- More afterschool activities
- A greater sense of urgency to address these issues
- Services for twice exceptional Black students
- Greater financial transparency
- Teachers union is not representative and not consistently supporting teachers and admin supporting equity.

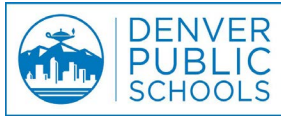
Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Ensure Black representation in employment (incl. removing Spanish language requirements for employment² and audits of HR Department)**
- **Support and invest in BFAC**
- **Support and invest in Black students (incl. various student services, using both emergency and permanent funds)**
- **Meet consistently with Black voices (e.g., parents, BFAC, local consultants) and ensure they always have a voice**
- Choose your cabinet wisely
- Utilize exemplary schools (like Dr. MLK Jr. HS) as thought partners and collaborators for systemic earning, not just for photo ops
- Consider developing Black Excellence Plans for central office departments

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

¹The Black Family Advisory Council also provided a more detailed list of responses to these questions prior to the meeting; this more detailed response can be found [here](#).

²The participant did not clarify the employment positions for which Spanish language proficiency were believed to be a requirement



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Northeast Denver Innovation Zone (NDIZ) Far Northeast Families | Tuesday, August 31, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Hosted by Vernon Jones

Participants: 20 approximately (via Zoom)

Language: English, Spanish, and Amharic

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?

- Innovation zones are giving principals the support they need.
- Amazing teachers
- All schools can be independent
- We saw a lot of creative solutions during the pandemic; schools can learn from each other
- Leadership development has improved
- The teacher leadership process.
- The collaborative approach to support our teachers and community
- The ability to bring partnerships into the schools (e.g., mentors for students)

What needs improvement?

- Transportation (District and RTD)
- Overall communications do not consider the different schedules of the various schools/school types (e.g., some schools started a week before the official DPS date)
- Communication with students, a lot of messages only go to parents, and students often don't receive the information
- Improve partnerships (District and Zone)
- DPS is top-heavy; there are too many administrators
- Better allocation of resources
- The portfolio approach needs a learning agenda
- Articulate a more thoughtful set of high school options that meet student needs
- We used to be leaders; now we are followers

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Heal DPS: Denver is a community that needs a lot of healing. We need you to be the chief healer
- Transparency is critical
- Address transportation issues, so it is accessible to all students
- Take your time with this listening tour
- Meet people 1:1 to learn more
- There has been too much turmoil; buckle up and stay the course
- Think about what's best for our students, do not listen to just politics
- Sliceworks is the closest you will find to NY Pizza
- Must try Curtis Park Creamery



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Native American Community | Tuesday, September 14, 2021, 12:30 to 1:30 PM

Hosted by Steve ReVello and Rose McGuire

Participants: 16 (in person at the Denver Indian Resource Center); Representatives from Pueblo of Laguna, Muscogee (Creek), N. Arapaho,/Yuchi, Cherokee, Cheyenne River Sans Arc Lakota, Hunkpapa Lakota/Standing Rock, Navajo, Oneida, Lakota, Crow, Dine/Oglala Lakota, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate/Rosebud, Kiowa/Cherokee

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?

- Indigenous land acknowledgment, including in some schools where it is student-led
- Learning communities for Native American students in different high schools about various topics (e.g., suicide prevention)
- The inclusiveness and openness of systems that allow for the provision of mental health and social-emotional services
- Native American Culture and Education (NACE) the program itself
- Inclusivity on issues beyond race
- Restorative justice approaches
- The increase of Social Emotional Learning curriculum in schools
- The self-determination of our students and our people
- Inclusion of culturally appropriate academic material (e.g., films about Native American topics)

What needs improvement?

- Hire and retain Native American staff/faculty that will support our students
- Consider how HR policies limit the hiring of Native American practitioners and service providers
- A curriculum that is inclusive and honors Native Americans
- White and Eurocentric models are not serving our students
- Predominant culture silences our voices; they are too loud.
- Ongoing education and training, so teachers and staff are prepared to teach our students
- Teachers use Native American students to teach about Native American issues/topics. It is tokenism and inappropriate
- Students who lack credits are sent to pathways schools
- Some people do not understand equity and make decisions that are good for the schools but do not put students first

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Get Native American students out of the bottom in terms of attendance, discipline, academics, graduation. If you can solve that problem, you will not have a problem solving other issues
- We do not choose to be leaders; the students choose us
- Walk the talk and continue to engage with the Native American Community



SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Cafecito | Wednesday September 15, 2021, 8:00 to 9:00 AM

Participants: Approximately 40 (15 in person, 25 attending virtually);

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?

- **Dedicated and caring staff and teachers with “students first” mentality**
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) (esp. public-private partnership, Denver Preschool Program, free full-day kindergarten, high quality instruction);**
- **Recognition of the importance of equity (incl. pathway programs for teachers of color)**
- Increased social-emotional support
- Operations (incl. food services, communication and delivery of bond projects)
- Programs for high-achievers in high school (e.g., East HS)
- The support of voters for bond measures
- Understanding of the interconnectedness of school and community in coordination and planning
- Vaccination efforts in school-based clinics

What needs improvement?

- **Low educational attainment (esp. low proficiency rates in early literacy and attainment of Latinx males, in general)**
- **Institutional racism and a difficult work environment is causing great teachers and leaders (esp. those of color) to leave the district; they are often labeled as difficult or divisive**
- **Students are not empowered to advocate for themselves nor advocated for (“they have no union”)**
- Concerns about security in high schools
- DPS is losing talent because housing is too expensive
- Lack of transparency regarding COVID safety measures at schools (e.g., classroom ventilation)
- The current Human Resource systems to not appear to result in sufficient promotion of leaders of color
- The plans for improved equity and social-emotional learning are encouraging, but more action is needed
- The transition to online learning was difficult and didn't work for many students

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Improve choice system (incl. revision of enrollment zones, more parental support during the process, and making choice process easier and more transparent,)**
- **Provide teachers with greater support (incl. opportunities for pay and advancement, paraprofessionals in classrooms, training in social-emotional learning, and other supports for individual and small group instruction)**
- **Work to support and empower parents in the school system in general, and to promote student learning in particular**
- Promote equitable access to gifted and talented (GT) programs for multilingual learners and students of color
- Ensure exit interviews are done with teachers of color
- Find a way to implement the Black Excellence Plan and Consent Decree together using similar strategies
- Speak out on housing policy

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

LGBTQ+ Student Group | Thursday September 23, 2021, 10:30 to 11:30 AM

Participants: Approximately 70 (34 logins to Zoom meeting, with multiple students attending per login)

Language: English

Below is a summary of the feedback from this listening session.¹ It may not reflect the views of all participants and stakeholders district-wide.

What is going well?

- **Many teachers are accepting, supportive, sensitive, respectful, and can be trusted with private information**
- **Much of the school community is generally kind and supportive, especially in terms of supporting mental health**
- **Many community members are asking about and using individuals' self-identified pronouns, genders, and sexualities, even when these are fluid.**
- **Many schools have supportive Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) groups**
- **Students are often given a voice (as in this event)**
- **Gender neutral restrooms in many schools**
- **Quality curriculum and instruction**
- Names can be changed in Infinite Campus
- COVID procedures are keeping the school community safe

What needs improvement?

- **Not all teachers are supportive (incl. not using self-identified pronouns or names)**
- **Some students are disrespectful (not respecting self-identified pronouns or names, indulging in stereotypes, using slurs, exhibiting transphobic and homophobic attitudes, incl. sometimes in class)**
- **There are often no specific rules or consequences when students are disrespectful or bullying LGBTQ+ students (actual or perceived)**
- **Many students and teachers do not have enough education about LGBTQ+ issues (incl. asking inappropriate questions)**
- **There is not enough LGBTQ+ representation in schools, including in the curriculum**
- **Gender-neutral bathroom issues (e.g., not labeled, too few, lack of trash cans)**
- **Limited sports options for transgender/non-cisgender students**
- Not all schools have GSAs; and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) representation is often lacking in these groups
- Other issues mentioned: Some students outed without their consent; substitute teacher training;

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Be a role model by being respectful and adopting best practices (esp. providing, asking for, and using appropriate pronouns)**
- **Be open-minded**
- **Celebrate Pride Month**
- **Work to expand and improve gender-neutral bathrooms**
- **Work to integrate respect for LGBTQ+ history and representation into district curricula**
- **Believe and listen to students; continue outreach**
- **This is not political - know that LGBTQ+ students need these kinds of resources to stay safe and healthy**
- **Continue outreach and listening to students**
- **Ensure that middle schools get resources for LGBTQ+, not just high schools**
- **Be very careful about outing students**

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Multilingual Education District Advisory Committee | Wednesday, September 28, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Participants: Approximately 122

Languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Amharic, Somali, Nepali, French, and Mandarin

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?

- **Communication between district or school and families (including text messages, robocalls, translations into home languages, responsiveness to questions)**
- **Pandemic response and COVID precautions**
- **Kind, welcoming, and dedicated school staff who focus on students' safety, social emotional, and academic needs**
- **Students are back in person, learning**
- **Students enjoy going to school**
- Montessori programming
- Follow through with individual education plan (IEP) accommodations
- Transportation
- Graduation rates
- Dual language programming

What needs improvement?

- **COVID precautions (including consistency between schools, masking during pick-up and drop-off, rising cases)**
- **Transportation scheduling issues (including some routes being cut, transportation equity between schools)**
- **Supports for multilingual students, including maintenance of home language**
- **Integration of students from different communities to ensure student socialization and a diverse student body at each school**
- Communication with students
- Student academic achievement (including graduation rates, reading proficiency, Orton Gillingham instruction not yet used district wide)
- Early identification of students who need extra support
- Declining enrollment
- Parent and staff relationships
- Inequities between schools
- Recess supervision
- School-to-prison pipeline
- Teacher pay
- Trauma informed practices and social emotional learning

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Meet and listen to parents, teachers, and other community stakeholders, engaging in two-way conversations and commit to addressing their concerns**
- **Meet students and work to understand the student experience (e.g., through student shadowing)**
- **Learn about schools' challenges with students and social media**
- **Visit schools, including their extracurricular events**
- Provide more after school athletic opportunities
- Respect teachers and make sure they do not have to spend their own money on supplies
- Develop a strategic plan to increase multilingual education for all DPS students
- Support small schools
- Visit Montbello, including the Community Engagement Center
- Visit Maxwell Elementary
- Visit Metropolitan State University (MSU)

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Warren Village | Wednesday September 28, 2021, 6:30 to 7:30 PM

Participants: Approximately 21 (including 4 attending virtually)

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?

- Food assistance provided through the school or district
- Many teachers have been dedicated, flexible, communicative, patient, and bond with students
- Some schools are very effective and communicative (incl. Rocky Mountain Prep, Creekside, DSST Byers)
- The Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs) at some schools are very effective and solution-oriented
- Afterschool services provided by the YMCA are high quality and very helpful

What needs improvement?

- Verbal and physical bullying is often a problem; to address bullying, students and families are often separated instead of being brought together
- There are big differences in quality and resources between schools, forcing parents to opt out of their neighborhood school
- Many after and before school programs are full
- School lunches can be improved and students need more time to eat lunch
- Students who cause disruptions can impede the learning of others or cause students to leave a school; teachers need more training, resources, and empowerment to deal with discipline and classroom management (incl. during remote learning)
- History classes can be white-washed and assignments aren't always inclusive or sensitive to the culture of all students
- Sometimes school staff are insensitive and unhelpful
- Some schools start too early for younger students; differing school schedules are hard for parents
- There is not enough transportation for students

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Stay open and listen to the community
- Put students first and treat them like people
- Find the balance between academics and social-emotional learning and mental health, especially now, after the pandemic
- Be a change agent after a time of disruption
- Remember that teachers' mental health is also important
- Address bullying and discipline on behalf of the parents

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

School Safety Team | Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Participants: 18 (including 3 participating virtually)

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?

- The safety team is collaborating well with several district departments, including transportation, facilities, and student equity and opportunity (SEO)
- The team still has a great relationship with the Denver Police Department (DPD), even after the removal of School Resource Officers (SROs) from schools
- DPD, fire department, and emergency medical services (EMS) are very responsive
- This department has a lot of forward thinking and planning and potential for growth and opportunity. The last three years have seen a lot of progress in making schools safer for students, and there is excitement to see where it is going

What needs improvement?

- There is a big gang problem, and off campus criminal incidents have skyrocketed
- Some schools seem to be getting complacent about safety, and it is no longer a priority
- Safety teams often do not get the same kind of praise and recognition that other teams get, or it is only given privately; safety team members and policy often feels criticized from all directions, with the district not publicly defending this team
- School leaders often don't value safety staff and don't want them to be visible; school leaders can be disrespectful and unprofessional
- School leaders don't understand the standards of service or job descriptions of safety staff and often try to utilize them as runners, office staff, or paraprofessionals
- There is a lack of understanding of safety team members' expertise and that they are distinguished from security guards by their extensive training, which includes crisis intervention and de-escalation trainings
- Safety staff are understaffed and getting burnt out quickly
- There is an inability to hire sufficient people and a lack of innovative solutions to hiring, including for bus drivers and maintenance
- There is a lack of clarity around the policy and timeline for SROs leaving schools

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Take everything you hear with a grain of salt and avoid hasty decisions
- Get to know the Safety team and other departments
- Do a Campus Security Office (CSO) ride along
- Leverage the safety team's honesty, openness, and transparency; have someone in your cabinet participate in a safety training so that it is clear what the training entails
- Avoid basing district policies on a small group of voices that most people disagree with, capitulating to a small group of people with a particular agenda and point of view while there is a giant minority that are quiet and who don't attend board meetings
- Avoid solutions and policies that are Band-Aids and not long-term solutions

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Salvation Army - Lambuth Center | Thursday, September 30, 2021, 5:30 to 6:30 PM

Participants: 10

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?

- Schools have good security and safety
- Schools are much more communicative than other districts, especially in terms of notifying parents when students miss school; teachers and schools reach out, showing they care and won't let students fall through the cracks
- **DPS Family and Community Engagement (FACE) team's relationship with the Lambuth Family Center**
- **Students enjoy school**
- Online school is going well
- Front office staff and teachers are helpful
- The enrollment process tends to go smoothly for families
- Teachers and staff seem to collaborate well with each other and with families
- The after school program is a helpful resource

What needs improvement?

- **Parents aren't always sure of the best way to engage with and support learning in the hybrid learning approach, especially accessing additional supports like tutoring**
- Some schools need more crossing guards
- Transportation could be improved; sometimes students have had to miss school because of lack of transportation
- Some students experience bullying
- Not enough members in the school community speak the parents' language

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **You are off to a good start -- keep doing what you are doing!**
- Talk to the community about what is needed

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Manual High School | Friday October 1, 2021, 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Participants: Approximately 27

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?

- **Well-known history and legacy of Manual HS and its community**
- **Manual HS is an institution open to all and used by the community**
- The return of comprehensive high schools to Montbello and West
- Shift away from testing and school closings
- Social and emotional education of students (Columbine Elementary called out)
- Socially and economically diverse student population (Columbine Elementary called out)
- DPS alumni are committed to district
- Manual HS teachers invite parents/guardians to view curriculum
- Focus on developing "critical consciousness" at Manual HS

What needs improvement?

- **DPS ignores and does not have the trust of underserved school communities**
- **DPS staff may not share the superintendent's vision or values**
- **Too many barriers for community to access school-based resources**
- **A lack of genuine school/community partnerships**
- DPS not leveraging large number of volunteers among retirees
- Resources not equally shared between schools
- The way boundary lines are drawn favor some schools over others
- FACE department is critical but underutilized and short staffed
- Difficult for Manual HS staff to function under fear of closure, colocation, or turn-around
- Insufficient district support for Med School for Manual
- Too much money is invested in Choice and Enrollment
- Per-pupil nature of budgets leads principals to compete for students rather than focus on learning
- Lack of robust arts programs in schools and a concentration in a few art schools drains "normal" schools of talented students
- Teachers do not reflect demographics of their classrooms
- Too many Black and brown children are going to charter and innovation schools

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Make sure your senior staff are committed to your vision, values, and philosophy**
- **Stay close to educators, students, and families by frequently visiting schools and communities**
- **Make time for self-care**
- **Enjoy your job!**
- Don't be afraid to make people uncomfortable or upset
- Trust teachers and parents over consultants
- Apologize for the past wrongs DPS inflicted on communities like Manual HS
- Retract list of small schools under consideration for consolidation/closure
- Eliminate LEAP
- Give leaders more time to turn-around a school
- Stop allowing schools to be over capacity
- Move away from punitive forms of school discipline and utilize healers applying the cultural and indigenous traditions of the students they serve

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Student Voice, Secondary Students | Monday, October 4, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Participants: Approximately 12 (representing students from North HS, West HS, Emily Griffith HS, Marie L. Greenwood, Academy of Urban Learning)

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?

- **Teachers are very understanding of the difficulties students face while transitioning back to in-person learning, and they are helping students adapt**
- **The transition from online to in-person was very smooth**
- The reunification of West High School
- Strong teacher, student, and community relationships
- Social-emotional and mental health supports that make students feel safe at school and at home
- Inclusion of students with disabilities by teachers, staff, and peers
- The security in the school helps students and makes them feel safe
- Communications with DPS in general

What needs improvement?

- **Harsh tardy policies that are supposed to encourage students to be on time but instead promote absenteeism**
- **Segregation within DPS due to inequitable access to schools, inadequate transportation, and other systemic issues not unique to DPS**
- **The animosity between students of different backgrounds**
- **Students need more socialization**
- All schools should offer health or health education classes
- There was no adjustment period to help students transition from online to in-person school, which has resulted in many issues, including general unhappiness
- An overwhelming amount of school work; there is no time for enjoyment or fun
- The district needs to better communicate about complex and sensitive issues, so there are no misunderstandings and students do not get hurt in the process (e.g. Tay Anderson)
- More supports to help students attend college, especially at smaller high schools
- The administration needs to listen more to students and show they care
- More student leadership programs for students to get together and improve their schools

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Listen to students and have more of these types of meetings**
- **Take time to make genuine connections with people**
- **Put yourself in the kids' shoes and show empathy**
- Be nice to people with disabilities, help them, and include them in conversations
- Follow through with the things you say you are going to do
- Provide supports that will help students to be successful; all students should have access to the same resources (e.g., Emily Griffith high school offers support with SNAP, bus passes, support for refugees, and people experiencing homelessness)
- Address school policies that are too harsh on students (e.g., grading policies that don't allow students to grow)

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Student Voice, Elementary Students | Wednesday, October 6, 2021, 5:00 to 5:30 PM

Participants: Approximately 11 (representing students from Palmer, Polaris, Valverde, and Rocky Mountain Prep)

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?

- **Teachers are kind, try their best, and address students' individual needs**
- **Schoolwork is challenging and fun**
- Being back in person makes students feel good
- Schoolwork is often cooperative and hands-on
- Most students are paying attention and doing their work
- Teachers prepare students well for tests
- Some schools include life skills or values education (e.g., Palmer Elementary's *Palmer Pride*)

What needs improvement?

- **Scheduling issues (including rotating specials schedules that are confusing and hard to remember and recess times that are not long enough to play, go to the restroom, and fill water bottles)**
- **School food issues: (including food not good enough, not enough vegetarian options, no lactose free milk, and chocolate milk which may contain palm oil which harms the environment)**
- **Facility Issues: Bathrooms and hallways sometimes dirty; classroom and hallways sometimes small and crowded; more custodians may be needed**
- Class sizes sometimes seem too large
- At peanut free schools, where peanut products can trigger reactions in others, some students bring peanut products without consequences
- There are sometimes not enough consequences for bullying, and sometimes parents are not notified about bullying

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Improve conditions in poorer schools; think about all of the schools and treat them as equally important**
- **Work to end and prevent bullying and students being unkind and mean, fighting, and saying bad words to each other**
- **Visit schools at least once a month to see how they are doing**
- At least once a day, stop to look up and see which way the clouds are moving
- Keep doing student surveys
- Have security outside school as well as inside
- Work to have more parental supervision and check in on students
- Provide more after school activities
- Provide more books on the subjects we are working on to help with homework

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Athletics Meet and Greet | Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 12:00 to 12:30 PM

Participants: 13

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?

- **Across campus collaboration to help support our programs to the best of our ability**
- Dedication, as seen by the number of students participating despite the pandemic and the number of students that participated offseason
- In some places, participation in athletics is higher than before the pandemic
- Some gyms are in good condition

What needs improvement?

- **Need better resources for athletics. The amount of red tape one has to go through to make any upgrades is frustrating**
- **Improve indoor and outdoor facilities for students and the community, we have to remember that we need to provide adequate facilities for families and community members who come out to our spaces**
- We are losing athletes to other districts, charters, and private schools
- Transportation for athletes
- More staff to support sports
- We need to improve school pride so students want to play sports in our schools and don't go to other districts, charters, or private schools
- Sometimes it feels like other departments in the district are not very supportive of athletics
- Collaboration with Parks and Rec needs to improve to better support our students

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Be more visible; be out there for the community to see
- Be transparent
- Provide training and supports to move assistant directors in athletics to director positions

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

LGBTQ Commission | Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 6:00 to 7:00 PM

Participants: 23 (representing commission members and other interested citizens)

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?

- **Substantial faculty support for LGBTQIA+ students**
- **Local school leadership support for Gay-Straight Alliance activities**
- **Partnership with Denver Health to offer mental health services**
- Creation and expansion of Levi's position (Program Manager of LGBTQ+ Equity Initiatives)
- Prioritizing sexual health by partnering with Denver Health to provide relevant medications
- School lunches have become healthier and more accessible
- Inclusion of students with disabilities by teachers, staff, and peers
- School choice
- Financial literacy requirement
- Conversations around diversity, identity, and equity in the classrooms

What needs improvement?

- **Better communication**
- **More support for LGBTQIA+ students and families at the elementary level**
- There are inconsistencies in how schools address issues related to the LGBTQIA+ community
- Need additional programs and conversations around alternatives to traditional college
- Inconsistencies in schools' websites quality
- Equitable school funding
- Additional supports and resources for families that were severely impacted by the pandemic
- More schools/classrooms need to talk about intersectionality
- More allies for LGBTQIA+ staff and teachers, so the same teachers aren't constantly outing themselves

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Continue to have this type of meeting**
- **Drive to Mount Evans**
- More supports for single-site charter schools
- Figure out how to work with great teachers
- Be more transparent with data; this information is crucial for community organizations that support DPS students and families
- Improve city and district relationships, leverage policy expertise
- Visit the Drift; it has a Tiki bar
- Engage families in discussions about the small schools projects
- Support teachers (especially ethnic minorities) realize their vision for changes they would like to see within the DPS system

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Central Office Staff | Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 1:00 to 2:00 PM

Participants: Approximately 170

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?

- **Central office's support of school leaders and teachers, grounded in a "students first" philosophy (especially during the pandemic)**
- **Relationships and collaboration between central office departments, also grounded in "students first" philosophy**
- Translations and bilingual supports
- Professional development and knowledge of best practices (especially compared to other districts)

What needs improvement?

- **Tensions between the central office and schools, which came to a head during the strike and has persisted since then**
- **Retention of central office staff due to poor morale, below-market compensation, and reductions in flexibility for remote working (especially for Department of Technology Services team members)**
- Insufficient number of high quality, comprehensive schools in every neighborhood
- Central office staff wants to help in schools, but it doesn't always seem feasible

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Provide more opportunities to engage with central office staff in smaller settings to learn about what is going well and what are the areas of concern**
- **Figure out a way to make all of our schools amazing, so that all families will have the opportunity to get a top-quality education**

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

Parents of LGBTQ+ Students | Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 5:30 to 6:30 PM

Hosted by Levi Arithson

Participants: 15 (via zoom)

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?

- Levi's role (Program Manager of LGBTQ+ Equity Initiatives)
- Teachers are accepting and supportive across the board
- Students are accepting and welcoming in high schools
- Gay Student Alliances in secondary schools
- Ability to easily change pronouns in infinite campus
- All-gender bathrooms available in all schools
- DPS policies are some of the best around
- The listening tour
- Inclusion comes from the top, starting with the school leader

What needs improvement?

- Even though teachers are supportive and ready to learn about supporting LGBTQ+ students, they are lacking baseline training that leads to unconscious missteps
- Lack of baseline training creates situations where an LGBTQ+ student becomes a token, with teachers using the student as a learning experience
- Dividing kids by gender in elementary schools (for lines, lunch, bathrooms); this is psychologically harmful for non-binary students
- Troubling experiences have happened at Discovery Link, and there's no transparency on how to communicate or escalate
- Wish for a stream-lined process for communicating pronoun changes to all staff, including specials teachers
- In elementary schools, LGBTQ+ students often feel like the only one in the world, because they are the ones who are out at their school.

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- Signage and flags mean so much to the students and the families: consider mandating signage or flags to send a strong and welcoming message
- Start with training, but don't forget about culture
- Keep providing opportunities for parents to have a seat at the table
- Call on parents to be resources for each other
- Create pathways for parents across schools to connect so they aren't recreating the wheel

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

North High School | Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Participants: 14 total (including 2 students)

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?

- **Dedicated and caring teachers, staff, and school leaders who manage the return to in-person with flexibility and student support**
- **Communication, especially for special education students**
- **Schools' relationships and outreach with local community and organizations (e.g., vaccination clinics, connections with City of Denver)**
- **COVID precautions, including returning to in-person learning and school events (e.g., athletics, pep rallies, fall festivals)**
- **Social emotional and mental health supports (including grief counseling)**
- **Career and college supports (including career advisors and Denver Scholarship Foundation)**
- **Technology provided to students, especially during the pandemic**
- **Focus on recruiting and retaining teachers of color**
- **Fairness in school budgeting through fall adjustment**

What needs improvement?

- **Families aren't always clear where and how to get extra support for students; DPS structures are difficult to navigate**
- **Disparities between families and schools, depending on the resources available**
- **DPS has difficulties reimbursing employees and paying outside vendors**
- **The District and City of Denver should collaborate more closely on development, planning, and finance**
- **Schools need more resources and more equitable distribution of resources; reliance on DonorsChoose exacerbates inequalities**
- **Lack of innovative, long-lasting programs to support students more holistically, including cultural responsiveness, life skills, and a focus on the whole child**
- **All City Stadium is disintegrating and an embarrassment compared to facilities in other school districts**
- **Transportation policy lacks transparency**
- **DPS is top heavy**
- **Opportunities for pathway schools to collaborate with each other**
- **We need to improve our reputation and strive for greatness**
- **We need a Latino Excellence Plan**

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Do what is right for students considering the long-term impact, not short-term politics**
- **Continue creative community outreach with educators and grassroots organizations (like Cafecito)**
- **Be transparent in your policies and communications, including around top-heavy central office staffing**
- **Try to create a collaborative board environment**
- **Balance work and family life**
- **Surround yourself with people you trust who will ask you hard questions but also support your vision**
- **Connect with local artists to promote internal and external murals**
- **Check out: Elk Club and its golf simulator, Dew Drop Inn restaurant (esp. fried green tomatoes), Santa Fe Art Nights, local tamales, Southwest Denver leadership trainings, and El Corrido del Barrio at Su Teatro)**

SUPERINTENDENT'S LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR

George Washington High School | Wednesday October 20, 2021, 5:00 to 6:00 PM

Participants: Approximately 40 (Including 20 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?

- In-person learning
- **Social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health supports carried over from virtual learning to in-person learning (20 minutes of SEL a day)**
- The sense of community at GW and opportunities for student and parent involvement (e.g., 9th grade academy, parent night, sports)
- Rigorous courses at GW and opportunities for all students to participate in rigorous courses
- The transition from virtual learning to in-person learning has gone well at GW

What needs improvement?

- **Communication from the district to families**
- **Rushing to return to normal - maintain safety and allow teachers and students to process**
- **Equity work and culturally responsiveness**
- **Schools need support from the district to have courageous conversations on the ground**
- **There needs to be institutionalized equity training for all staff**
- Engage with families that are not typically at the table
- Communicate with families in other languages
- Communication with families about their students with disabilities
- Teacher retention - GW has good teachers and wants to retain them

Advice for Dr. Marrero

- **Listen to the entire DPS community (students, families, staff)**
- **Engage students and parents in decision-making**
- Have more DPS-wide events to connect district and schools
- Engage with diverse audiences and those who aren't typically in conversations
- Ensure equity between schools
- Leverage being an outsider, you have a fresh perspective
- Get rid of school choice
- Have the courage to make difficult decisions
- Provide humane communications, acknowledge struggles of community in communications (e.g., especially during the pandemic)
- Put students first