

Douglas County School District Community Survey

Parent Interviews, 2017



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Overview and Context

This report summarizes interviews of 19 DCSD parents that was conducted in early 2017, for the purpose of following up on specific issues of interest observed in an earlier survey. It is part of a larger community research project that includes the following reports:

- ➔ High School Student Survey Report
- ➔ High School Student Interview Report
- ➔ High School Student Data Breakouts and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Employee Survey Report
- ➔ Employee Interview Report
- ➔ Employee Data Breakouts and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Parent and Community Survey Report
- ➔ **Parent Interview Report**
- ➔ Parent Data Breakouts and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Community Data Summary and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Higher education and Employer Interview Report
- ➔ Summary of Top-Level Findings

School Selection

Section 1

Parents were asked about their consideration of schools and their criteria for school selection.

Parents use quality and academic fit as prominent criteria in selecting schools.

- ➔ Parents who considered other school options for their child besides their neighborhood school were asked why they did so.
 - > Quality was a primary factor in the decisions to consider different school.
 - > Parents who felt that their child had a special talent or aptitude often searched for a school that they felt might better serve that child.

“

My daughter started out in our neighborhood kindergarten and was excelling in math. We'd done some stuff through the online school. We went to the neighborhood school to look at a special program and the principal didn't seem interested. We were looking more at ability grouping.

–Elementary charter school parent

Transportation is often an issue in school choice.

➔ This is a particularly an issue with charter schools.

“

We started her in a Montessori preschool, but we didn't have a bus service there.

–*Neighborhood school parent*

“

As a single mom, if I wanted to send my kids to a charter school, I'd have to pay for transportation. You need a parent who is available to transport a child. They are not inclusive.

–*Neighborhood high school parent*

Parents are looking for the best fit for their child, regardless of school type or philosophy.

- ➔ For many parents, neighborhood versus charter status is not an issue. It's more about the fit for their child.

“ I don't care if it's a charter school or a neighborhood school I have no leanings. Maybe I'm ignorant about the differences. I was a public school kid and did okay.
–*Neighborhood elementary school parent*

“ Our closest school ... we did a lot of research on coloradoschoolgrades, and our closest school was Arrowwood, which was ranked the lowest in our area. Our school was getting a B or B-grade at the time. We only have one child and we wanted to do what was best so we got on rating lists at the top-rated schools.
–*Charter school parent*

School choice goes beyond academics.

➔ Cultural and social fit is important in the decision on a school.

“ Ironhorse – we were there for six years and the quality and enjoyment of being at that school started declining, and we started having awful experiences at the school. I used greatschools.com to look at different schools and read parent reviews and called the schools to ask them questions. I was looking for an environment that seemed friendly and welcoming.

–*Charter school parent*

“

We were on a waiting list for American Academy, but it was really long. We're STEM workers, so we wanted that. We went and toured Buffalo Ridge and the person who gave us the tour told us that American Academy was too stressful for some students and they were trying to come back. Buffalo Ridge has some extracurricular activities we liked.

–*Neighborhood school parent*

Curriculum

Section 2

Parents were asked about their familiarity with district educational philosophies and the strengths and weaknesses as they see them.

Familiarity with particular DCSD concepts was limited.

➔ Many parents were aware of concepts such as 4C's World Class Outcomes, 21st Century Skills, and Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, but often didn't know how they translated to learning.

“ I've heard those buzz words, but I can't tell you any more than what you just said.

–Elementary school parent

“ I have heard of those things before. I don't know how they all work at all. Even World Skills, I get the concept, but I don't know what would be broadened to the classroom. So it's hard for me to give information on how to implement it. I trust that they know what they are doing. And that is kind of scary to me. I have no idea if my son is getting the best education.

–Middle school parent

Parents were interested in learning more about concepts.

- ➔ Parents tended to know just enough to be curious about how the concepts were being used.

“ The concepts are more catch-phrase than actual concepts. It’s like No Child Left Behind – it sounds great, but how do you make it work? When teachers were really pushing it in 5th and 6th grade, it didn’t seem to always work. What is the WCO of a math worksheet? It’s more of a catchphrase than anything. Maybe someone could explain it and I’ll go, “Oh!”, but no one has ever explained it.

–Parent of children of varying ages

“ I’m familiar with them all but I don’t know if we’re achieving them. I don’t know how they’re evaluating them. It’s just education-speak. I kind of get what they’re trying to do.

–Middle school parent

Concepts aside, most parents were happy with the curriculum and philosophy as they observed it.

➔ Parents tended to be content with the learning they saw in their children.

“ From a content and process standpoint, one thing I like about Lone Tree Elementary is that all classrooms have the same process from K-6 grade. The content is very good. They’re learning different things – computer-based training, real-world stuff. I have a problem with Common Core, but that aside, I’m very satisfied.

–*Elementary and middle school parent*

“ From a Cresthill perspective, I’m very happy with the content. They’re teaching in regards to linking things with the world, which I like.

–*Elementary and middle school parent*

“ Curriculum is great. Both of my kids were talented and gifted in [midwestern state] and weren’t getting challenged. Here, my daughter is in the regular class and it’s challenging. She’s learning fractions in second grade. My son is working on analogies now, which is great. The curriculum is stimulating my kids’ minds and it’s nice to see them being challenged. They’re getting word problems. I’m impressed.

–*Neighborhood elementary and preschool parent*

Complaints about curriculum generally showed no strong pattern.

“ Erin Kane said that \$2 million is going to help handicapped kids, but what amount is going to kids on the other end of the spectrum. I think it’s ten grand or something. We’ve had the second grade behavior problem in our class. He gets attention and we want equal time for our child.
–*Elementary school parent*

“ They took three years of Spanish and never had a test, and didn’t really learn anything. They never had anything to take home. They’d rotate it in as a special. Too many specials and not enough depth in any of them.
–*Middle school parent*

“ I think one thing that may just be an American thing is that they change things up a lot. If something’s working well, just keep it. Our kids are a science experiment to them. If they’re not doing things consistent with other districts, it’s hard for us to compare and evaluate. There’s a test he takes that only one school does.
–*Middle school parent*

“ I could see him [second grader] starting to apply World Class Outcomes, but my kindergartner needs basic skills.
–*Parent and DCSD Employee*

Desired Skills

Section 3

Parents were asked about particular skills that they hoped to see their child develop to move to the next phase of life.

“Soft skills” were often noted as an outcome for DCSD.

➔ Communications skills in particular were frequently mentioned as a desired outcome.

“ Independence. I want them to be flexible and reflective. I want them to clearly communicate with other people for work or for social life. I want them to understand different perspectives. I also want them to be successful in their areas of passion. You can't really find their passions in elementary school.

–*Elementary school parent*

“ I'm big on public speaking and communications, and in our age of technology that gets lost. It's a skill that's not given enough focus. Presenting should be an ongoing part of learning.

–*Elementary school parent*

“ Communication. Being able to communicate is 99 percent...huge. They're getting that in the schools. Math skills, social studies, civics...those will parlay after graduation. I'm old school.

–*Elementary and middle school parent*

Foundational skills were a concern.

- ➔ Some parents focused on being sure that their child had a good all-around modern education.

“ Broad learning with great math foundation. Fabulous English foundations. Be able to speak and write clearly. Reading comprehension. The three R’s, and maybe add technology.

–*Elementary school parent*

“ Learn how to navigate the tools of technology, be resilient, critical thinking. Study skills. I worry that this is being lost in DCSD because it’s all about collaboration and group projects. My child in college still needs to read a textbook. DCSD thinks that’s old-fashioned.

–*High school parent*

Careers and post-high school practical skills were an area of focus.

➔ Career/college preparation and life skills were an area of concern for parents.

“ We used to have career days where kids learned about realistic careers... I was impressed by the program Young Ameritown. Fifth graders do it. Each kid interviews for a job. My son wants to go to a summer camp about it now. It's a real world summer camp.

–Elementary and preschool parent

“ How to balance a checkbook, how to manage money, how to research and go after careers and write resumes.

–Middle school parent

“ For my kids, college prep. Be able to function and strive at the collegiate level academically. They struggle with knowing how to study.

–Parent of children of multiple ages

Good Versus Very Good

Section 4

In the parent survey, many parents provided a response of 'good' when asked about their child's educational experience. In the interviews, parents were asked what it would take to get the highest rating of 'very good.'

Diversity of student experiences is a barrier to “very good”.

- ➔ Most commonly, parents stated that the district is large and the individualized attention needed for a ‘very good’ rating was simply infeasible on a broad scale.

“ All the parents have their own background. It would be impossible for the district to have a very good rating from every parent.

–Elementary school parent

“ Good. A very good rating would require doing more. Sometimes my kids get bored. They [classroom] have kids at different levels, so it’s unavoidable. Maybe a smaller class size, maybe a little more challenging would increase it to very good.

–Middle school parent

A “very good” rating requires near-perfection over time.

- ➔ Parents also averaged out scores over different children or years, and noted a reluctance to report ‘very good’ if they saw any room for improvement.

““ So much of education is based on the teacher you get. From one year to the next, you get people with different personalities who teach differently. We’ve gone from great to good, and it really depends on the teacher.

–Elementary school parent

““ Overall, good, but it’s averaging out my three data points [three children]. Very good, poor (but not the school’s fault), good (but an experiment).

–High school parent

““ Good. It depends on what you compare it to. There are worse places to be if you look elsewhere in the U.S. There’s always going to be pressures pulling kids in different directions. Can it be better? Sure. But it’s good. I can’t tell you what it would take to get to “Very Good”.

–Elementary and middle school parent

Support at Home

Section 5

The survey of students indicated the importance of support at home. Parents were asked what advice they would offer a new parent about providing support at home.

Parental involvement was deemed straightforward and important.

- ➔ Parents viewed their own involved role as being important to the process. This included understanding what their child was doing and communicating with the school/teacher(s), as well as being a partner in learning.

“ Be involved. Understand ... talk to your child, go to the teacher conferences.
–*Middle and elementary school parent*

“ Be positive with them and support them. Have a good attitude. Kids pick up parents' feelings, so keep any educational concerns to yourself.
–*Middle school parent*

“ Figure out what your kids are doing throughout the day. See where you can go above and beyond that. Explain what you do as a parent. Discuss big concepts like government. You want your kids to ask questions of the teachers rather than just be rote learners. Show them real world applications of learning, like measuring in cooking.
–*Elementary and preschool parent*

Trends in District Education

Section 6

Parents were asked if they felt the quality of education was rising, declining, or holding steady over time.

There was no clear consensus on trends in educational quality.

- ➔ Overall, parents centered around a rating of consistency in the quality of education over time.

“ I worry, talking to parents of high schoolers, that district expectations will be lessened. I worry that my kids may not have been expected to do as much as others.

–Elementary school parent

“ Holding steady. I don't know if I've seen any real growth.

–Middle school and elementary school parent

“ I think the District is growing in a positive direction. I don't know if it's DCSD or the state, but they have a special program now at Highlands Ranch. Otherwise, we would've sent him to Douglas County High School, which is his home school.

–Middle school parent, child with IEP

Charter School Impacts

Section 7

Parents were initially asked if they felt that charter schools had an impact on neighborhood school funding levels. However, as the interviews progressed, this discussion broadened into an overall discussion of charter schools.

Many parents had viewed charter schools as a positive option.

- ➔ Simply having another choice in education was deemed to be a positive in many parents' minds.

“ There's no disadvantage to having charter schools and neighborhood schools. It's nice to have options.

–Neighborhood middle school parent

“ I actually believe charter schools might be better than neighborhood schools. That is my feeling without knowing their scores, I feel like they are more structured. Less bullying. I hear that from other parents.... I feel that if they want to [build charter schools], that gives parents another option.

–Middle school open enrollment parent

Potential negatives of charter schools were often de-emphasized.

➔ Parents often saw no particular disadvantages of charter schools.

“

They don't affect neighborhood schools. It's a bonus to have charter schools because they take pressure off neighborhood schools.

–*Charter school elementary parent*

“

Within a block, we have parents of kids in multiple schools. I think it's good to have choices, because each kid is different and they learn differently and in different environments. At the end of the day, they all play in the street together. I disagree with the theory that school choice affects our kids' ability to make friends in the neighborhoods.

–*Neighborhood middle and elementary school parent*

Fewer parents had negative opinions of charter schools with no positives.

➔ Primary complaints about charter schools involved damaging neighborhood schools' resources and culture. Even so, few parents had uniformly negative opinions of charter schools.

“

If a school falls on hard times, or if a charter school is built in a neighborhood school that is losing enrollment, it loses energy to turn the neighborhood schools around. Charter schools give the 'haves' an escape route, while the 'have nots' can't escape.

–Neighborhood high school parent

“

Charter schools offer big promises. In conversations in my neighborhood, people perceive it as a better opportunity. Charter schools market and don't have to report out everything like a public school does. The neighborhood schools' scores are pretty transparent.

–Parent of young DCSD open enrollment students and DCSD employee

Most parents saw both pros and cons of charter schools (1 of 3).

- ➔ Most parents saw the pros and cons as being merely differences, and on net they supported having charter schools as an option.

“ The argument against [choice] is that you’re taking money from public schools. In the end, education is about YOUR kids. I care about everybody, but I focus on my child, not the neighborhood school down the street. But we live in a competitive world and I believe that competition makes people up their game.

–Elementary charter school parent

“ One of the great things about charter schools is that they can focus on specialty things like arts. They aren’t restrained by the processes of regular schools. They tend to be smaller, though, so they don’t have the positive activities of sports, band, orchestra. With special ed, there aren’t as many opportunities.

–Middle/elementary charter school parent of a child with an IEP

Most parents saw both pros and cons of charter schools (2 of 3).

“

I have friends with kids in charter schools who are happy, and others are unhappy that too many charter schools are coming in. Too many schools competing with each other limit the funding for those schools. As far as quality, I've seen excellent schools in both areas. Charter schools are the way to go for specialized education such as arts...They [charter schools] improve education because it keeps the neighborhood school on their toes. Neighborhood schools have to change to compete. But too many charter schools is a bad thing.

–Elementary and preschool neighborhood school parent

“

It affects public school funding. It's a negative impact to the public schools, but people want choice.

–Neighborhood elementary school parent

Most parents saw both pros and cons of charter schools (3 of 3).

“ Most typical kids may do well because it's hands on and a great learning experience for them [at charter schools]. That works well for typical children, but it doesn't work well for kids with special needs...I think it's great to have choices, because every kid learns differently. Some are more hands on, boys learn differently than girls, and so on. Parents need to look into it. The more options, the better.

– *Open enrollment middle school parent, child with IEP*

Interactions with School Board/ District Staff

Section 8

Parents were asked if they had interactions with the school board or district-level staff, and if so, how communications and relations could be improved between the board and the public.

Most parents have little interaction or knowledge of the board.

➔ A majority of parents neither knew about nor particularly cared about interactions with the school board. The important interactions in their mind were generally at the school level.

“ I have not had any interactions [at the board or district level].
–*High school parent*

“ We’re focused on our kid’s education. The education at school is a starting point, and anything beyond that is above us.
–*Elementary school parent*

“ We don’t look much at the district level. There’s a steep learning curve at the district level. I don’t even know how you could get involved at the district level.
–*Elementary school parent*

Listening, contact, and open communications were key aspirations of parents for the board (1 of 3).

- ➔ Parents want to be sure that board members hear them and each other. They don't mind debate, and understand that board members may have different philosophies, but want to see open discussion of issues.



Value everybody and hear everybody. Get out to the community and see what they need. For parents who are new to it, they have blinders on. Try to compromise - I teach my children to compromise. Don't throw tantrums or use nasty words. We'll never have 100 percent agreement.

*–Elementary school parent
and DCSD Employee*

Listening, contact, and open communications were key aspirations of parents for the board (2 of 3).

“ As a taxpayer and a parent, I get it. They were elected based on their platform, but at least have a conversation and consider a different point of view. That’s not happening.
–*Parent of children of multiple ages*

“ You can’t make some people happy. Some people are mad and want to make a change, and they won’t be happy until the board changes. The board can only do their work.
–*Middle school neighborhood parent*

“ Any time there’s a rift, you have to strongly open the lines of communication. You have to be transparent. I don’t know the relationship issues with the board and the public, but I can tell there’s tension. You have to talk with the public. With the school system, there’s a steep learning curve to figuring out how to get involved and who to talk to. Can we make the lines of communication more clear? It doesn’t seem like parents who support the district tend to show up at board meetings. They’re at school meetings, so the people who support the policies are showing up at a different level.
–*Elementary school parent*

Listening, contact, and open communications were key aspirations of parents for the board (3 of 3).

“ The best thing that DCSD can do is be on the Highlands Ranch message board. They get a lot of feedback.

–Middle school parent

“ It is incumbent to follow Robert's Rules. Allow all board members to be heard. The old corps is digging in their heels and the perception is that they're voting in as much as they can before they get voted out. There's just disrespect and they're not following the rules. Interactions with the public have been deplorable. Listen to the public and don't just shut them down.

–High school parent

Handling Growth

Section 9

Parents were asked about how the district is handling growth in the county.

Growth is seen from the perspective of the viewer in a large county.

- ➔ Most parents had no complaints about handling growth in and of itself. However, this was a topic for which most parents had local knowledge but not districtwide knowledge.

“ I think they’ve handled the growth well. We have choices. I don’t particularly like that middle schools are with high schools, though.
–*Elementary and middle school parent*

“ They’ve been okay. Douglas County is very big and has rural areas and metro areas, so you get different opinions. It’s very hard from them to handle.
–*Neighborhood elementary school parent*

- ➔ Discussions of growth concerns typically centered more around budgets and use of money than about physically addressing growth.

“ Considering the growth of this county and the money in this county - it’s no secret that’s it’s wealthy – the schools in general have not seen the same level. We’re having budget crises and I don’t understand that.
–*Multiple neighborhood school parent*

Funding

Section 10

The parent survey showed more recognition of need than support for tax measures to meet those needs. Parents were asked to comment on why this was the case.

Many parents attributes a lack of support to the general conservative nature of the county (1 of 2).

- ➔ Many parents speculated that lack of support for tax measures is first and foremost the general ideology of themselves and/or the county in general.

“ I think it’s the conservative mentality in this area, of which I am one. Throwing money at the situation doesn’t always solve the problem. We’ve all heard the horror stories about government “losing” money. The question is how we’re spending money now and can we spend it more wisely...If there’s a tax that’s going to make a huge difference in the system, and I can do the research to show that it’s benefitting society, I won’t balk. But the first instinct for parents and taxpayers with a conservative mentality, they’re going to want services but why spend money?
–*Middle school parent*

“ We see how much we’re already paying. I have to make my budget work and sacrifice things, and the district’s not making appropriate tradeoffs. We should privatize schools completely, and then we’ll see some competition. I really feel that way. We should privatize fire departments and all that stuff to take some of the pork out.
–*Elementary and middle school parent*

Many parents attributes a lack of support to the general conservative nature of the county (2 of 2).

“

Schools have unlimited needs and wants, and limited resources. If taxpayers are already paying a good amount, that's a struggle. Get smarter and find a better way of doing it.

–Parent of multiple children of varying ages

“

Property values are increasing, which means taxes are increasing, which means revenue to the District is increasing, so it's hard to say we should pay more money.

–High school parent

“

I don't get it. I make less than most people here. I could tell you we are one of the families that has a less[er] annual income, but I would be willing to pay taxes.

–Middle school parent

“

If they have the options for charter schools or private schools, they'll send their kid there and not want to pay taxes for public schools. Colorado taxes for schools are really low and people are used to it. I used to live in Iowa and we paid much more and people don't worry about it.

–Elementary school parent

The district's physical size and growth patterns may play a role in reluctance for funding measures.

- ➔ Some parents noted that the district is very large with different growth patterns and facilities, and they judge primarily based on what they see personally.

“ I think the community thinks the outside of a school looks fine, or their school is fine, they don't see a need. There's always a moment where we don't put our best foot forward. To get things done, you have to show weakness sometimes. Those hard conversations might show weakness, and people don't like to do that.

–Elementary and preschool parent

“ If my school doesn't need stuff, I assume that no schools need anything. I think we don't need anything. Everything looks good. We have some mobiles, but that's fine. Populations change. I would say no to a tax increase because my schools are fine.

–Middle school parent

Communication of need was seen as an issue.

- ➔ Some parents felt that support could be there, but the “sales pitch” needed more honing.

“ It's a selfish reason. People don't know how bad conditions are. In [midwestern state] we saw issues fail because they didn't show pictures of conditions and what they were like. All people hear is 'more money'....You have to get word out about the implications. Let them know where their money would go.

–Elementary and preschool parent

“ The bond issues haven't been marketed right. They've been a political issue, and people aren't being approached properly. We're not looking at the bigger picture. People who are retired are not invested in schools and don't see the purpose. It's not being communicated well to people who need to buy in.

–Elementary and preschool parent

A smaller number of parents specifically blamed the district.

- ➔ Reasons centered on either a concern about spending decisions or a perception of a lack of cohesion on the board.

“ It's the squabbling on the board. The board isn't coming forward with a consolidated position. They need to do that and get the public behind them. But when the board is criticizing each other, people say 'you can't even manage your own affairs'. We're not going to give you more money.

–Elementary and middle school parent of a child with an IEP

“ Some other parents have been really studying the budgets and making them public through social media, e-mails, and the news. I got the budget report and sifted through. We want to hold our elected officials accountable.

–Multiple neighborhood school parent

Other Suggestions

Section 11

During the course of the interviews, some parents made specific suggestions about “easy wins” for the district. These suggestions ranged from big-picture philosophies to tactical requests, and are presented in the following pages.

Other Suggestions (1 of 7)

“ I’d like to reinforce that we should support the kids on the upper end of the spectrum as well as the lower end. Our daughter on the upper end was kind of neglected by her teacher. It’s not fair. The gifted kids need resources, too.
–*Elementary school parent*

“ Being honest would make it better. The district gives me communications that make everything look perfect, and I know it’s not. The newsletters are always great. Don’t become defensive if I want to come and talk to you as a parent. Let’s have honest conversations.
–*Elementary and preschool parent*

“ More emphasis on public speaking would benefit everyone. None of my other suggestions wouldn’t require funding, but learning trades would be a benefit. I’m not in line with the mentality that you need college to be successful.
–*Elementary school parent*

Other Suggestions (2 of 7)

“ We go to the middle school that is fed by six elementary schools. They have pods, which is a good concept, so you have a small section of the school which is your pod. They mix you up with all of the other schools so you meet all of the kids new. You make friends and now they go away. Why can't you put the whole elementary school into one pod? When the pods come out, everyone's calling around to see. And why switch them up twice in two years?

–Neighborhood school parent

“ Build a community and have better communications with parents. Everyone is looking out for 'me.' It's all about 'me.' Everybody should work together to make it a better environment for everybody.

–Elementary and middle school parent

“ Be sure to keep your talented teachers who can reach students.

–Elementary school parent

Other Suggestions (3 of 7)

“ I keep going back to writing – focus on quality of writing, not quantity.
–*Elementary and high school parent*

“ An easy win would be increasing communications with parents. There’s a lot of stay at home parents here who are willing to do whatever it takes to help kids. Can teachers communicate more? Parent-teacher communication is huge.
–*Elementary and preschool parent*

“ I like seeing them do experiments and try different things. Steal something from a successful charter school.
–*High school parent*

Other Suggestions (4 of 7)

“ Keep politics aside. Open communications and free speech on both sides is healthy. If you want to improve, all kids should be heard.
–*Elementary and middle school parent*

“ Year-round school. It would be doing the whole picking of classes with a year-round schedule. Registering for classes. If another school offers something that my kid likes, I could go to that school for three months.
–*Middle and elementary school parent*

“ What if they listened to the committee that approves charter schools. If we have people who look at the merits of a charter schools and say it's a bad idea, then maybe we should listen to those people. They often do not follow the recommendations of the committee.
–*High school parent*

Other Suggestions (5 of 7)

“ You can’t make the district perfect for everyone. You need to set standards. Kids are leaving the district because they don’t see a direction.
–*Elementary and middle school parent*

“ I’m so happy with the level [of education my daughter is receiving].
–*High school parent*

“ Put the student first. What’s best for the students in any situation. This should be the main question in every action – budgets, discipline, curriculum. It doesn’t appear to be happening.
–*Parent of children of multiple ages*

“ I think ability grouping sounds good on paper, but ultimately kids learn from other kids. I’d rather see smaller groups that are more mixed in ability and also make school a little less confusing for the kids.
–*Elementary school parent*

Other Suggestions (6 of 7)



As a parent of a child with special needs, I'd like to see more access and knowledge for parents in preschool settings. They need to know early what their options are, instead of trying a bunch of things and backpedaling when things don't work. I want them to try the least restrictive things first, but know that the process can go further if things don't happen.

Can we have a map of the whole process? If the District was forthcoming with a map, that would be great, and just let us know that we need to exhaust the process at each stage before moving to the next stage. I'm the type of parent who wants the least restrictive environment possible, but I recognize that other parents may feel differently. But I would feel better if I knew there was a system in place. You want to know that you have options, that you're not drowning. I worry so much about him. Do I have to put him in an institution? I can barely hold down a job due to problems, so I don't know what to do with him. I had no idea that the District could support him.

—Middle school parent, child with IEP

Other Suggestions (7 of 7)

“

Go outside the curriculum. Don't just teach what's in here. Go the extra mile and teach them things that aren't just given to them. It seems like they all follow the same curriculum and it's the same thing we learned, and there is so much technology now. They have so many ways to learn more in depth.

–Middle school parent

Appendix

Methodology

➔ Research mode

- > All interviews were between 30-60 minutes long and conducted via telephone in February and March 2017.

➔ Recruiting

- > Participants were recruited from a list of survey respondents who indicated they would be willing to participate in further research.
- > Participants were selected randomly after being stratified by selected factors to ensure a good mix of parents in different situations (age of children, IEP versus Gifted and Talented versus Regular students, different school types).

➔ Confidentiality

- > Participants were promised confidentiality. Names and other identifying information of participants are not included in this report.

➔ Incentive

- > All participants were offered \$80 as an incentive for their participation.

Participant Profile

General characteristics of the participants from the interviews are summarized in the chart below.

Note that 19 interviews were conducted. However, many parents had children in multiple age ranges, and some households had children attending different types of schools. So some interviewees counted toward more than one category.

The two interviewees with students who had graduated also had children still in the system, but noted that they had children who had graduated from DCSD.

Student Grade Level	School Type	Special Programs
Preschool: 2 Elementary: 14 Middle: 7 High: 6 Graduated: 2	Neighborhood: 14 (Open Enrollment: 5) Charter: 5 Alternative: 1	Gifted and Talented: 1 IEP: 2

About Corona Insights

Our founder named the company Corona because the word means “light.” It’s the knowledge that surrounds and illuminates an issue; exactly what we provide. Our firm’s mission is to provide accurate and unbiased information and counsel to decision makers. We provide market research, evaluation, and strategic consulting for organizations both small and large.

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1580 Lincoln Street
Suite 510
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303.894.8246

