Unity of Purpose
It has been an absolute honor to serve as the Superintendent of the Douglas County School District this past year. When I officially assumed the role on July 1, 2018, I knew it would be a year to remember and the 2018-2019 school year was filled with amazing successes and accomplishments. It was also filled with challenges and unimaginable heartache.

What motivates me and keeps me going every day is each of the 68,000 students served by our amazing school district. As you’ve likely heard me say many times over the year -- our students are our Unity of Purpose. They are the reason this community and staff comes together. At the end of the day, we all want the same thing -- for each of those students to have the best possible future.

This Year-in-Review will walk you through some of the highlights from the 2018-2019 school year, including my first days as Superintendent, the passage of the first Mill Levy Override and Bond initiative since 2006, and the school district’s 60th anniversary. You’ll also read about some of the phenomenal ways we came together: the 10th anniversary of Wish Weeks in our high schools, the district’s awards and accolades, our bus drivers saving the day for many stranded drivers during a bomb cyclone blizzard, as well as spotlights on some of our most amazing students and staff.

Of course, a review of this past school year would be incomplete if I didn’t mention the unthinkable tragedy at STEM School Highlands Ranch. Our community is working through incredible heartache that will take many days, weeks, months and perhaps years to recover. I continue to be touched by the outpouring of support and love as we work to support our students who attend STEM as well as those attending other DCSD schools.

The 2018-2019 school year marked the 60th anniversary of DCSD. As we welcome the 2019-2020 school year, we begin to look to the future of the Douglas County School District. In September 2019, we will unveil a new 3-5 year strategic plan, which incorporates input received from our families, staff and community members.

I’m excited about what’s to come for our great school district and look forward to continuing to get to know our families and community members, and working together with each of you in our Unity of Purpose.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Tucker, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Douglas County School District
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1891: The new stone building for the Pioneer District had advanced technology such as running water and gaslighting.

1900: Prairie Canyon Ranch, Franktown

1920: Bihlmeyer Ranch

1909: The DCHS building constructed in 1907 burns down after just two years.

The Highlands Ranch Mansion
60 Years of Excellence

What was the world like in 1958? President Eisenhower created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the microchip was invented, Elvis Presley joined the Army, bread was 19 cents a loaf, and Douglas County voters enabled its historical school district to reorganize into Douglas County School District RE-1. With that decision, multiple school systems merged into one organization able to adapt to Douglas County’s rapid growth from small ranching communities to the diverse neighborhoods of today.

Much has changed since 1958. Fast-forward 60 years from today (to 2079!) and the Douglas County we know and love might be unrecognizable. One thing is sure though: DCSD will continue to provide a high quality educational foundation to every student that allows each to reach his or her individual potential -- no matter the changes or challenges along the way.
DCSD Welcomes
Dr. Thomas Tucker
Superintendent

“What motivates me and keeps me going every day is each and every one of the 68,000 students served by this amazing school district. They are the reason this community and staff comes together.”
DCSD began its 60th year with new Superintendent Dr. Thomas Tucker, who dove into the role with enthusiasm and setting the following goals for his first 90 days:

- Create a structure to listen and learn comprehensively about Douglas County School District and begin to cultivate trust and confidence through open communication.
- Establish a strong working relationship with the Board of Education.
- Study in-depth the District's student performance status and review the financial condition of the system with the Chief Financial Officer and the Board of Education.
- Promote a culture of excellence and continuous improvement with a focus on student achievement.

School Tours
Dr. Tucker visited all 91 DCSD schools during his first year (some of them twice), meeting with students and faculty as he learned more about his new home.

Community Connections
Douglas County welcomed Dr. Tucker as he spoke at Chambers, Retirement Communities, and events in the community. He also greeted people at the County Fair and was named an honorary member of the High Noon Rotary Club in Castle Rock.

Coffee Chats
In his first few months as Superintendent, Dr. Tucker met with members of the Douglas County community in coffee shops to introduce himself and to hear their thoughts on DCSD.
MLO and Bond Construction Begins!
Putting Taxpayer Money to Work

In November 2018, Douglas County voters approved additional local funding for our school district via a $40 million Mill Levy Override and $250 million no-new-taxes Bond. This was the first time DCSD had received a MLO and Bond in over 12 years.

**Mill Levy Override**
MLO funding is generally used for operational needs such as salaries, staffing, and student programming. DCSD is using these funds to:

- Begin addressing pay gaps for teachers and staff.
- Add counselors at the elementary school level.
- Change the middle and high school counselor-to-student ratio from one counselor per 350 students to one counselor per 250 students.
- Increase career and trade-focused programming, along with certified staffing for Career and Technical Education.
- School-level funding depending on the needs. This ranges from increasing funding for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch to adding support for the district’s special education and gifted and talented programs.
- Equal, per-pupil share to the district’s charter schools.
Bond
Bond funding can only be used for capital needs such as facility repairs, security upgrades, purchasing classroom equipment, busses, and technology. DCSD is using these funds to:

• Enhance safety and security at all schools, including neighborhood, charter, magnet, and alternative schools.

• Address overdue capital repairs at our school buildings such as heating and cooling systems, roofing, carpeting, fire alarm systems, plumbing, etc.

• Explore and provide new construction to address community growth.

• Replace aging buses and classroom technology.

Mill Bond Oversight Ad Hoc Committee
As promised, DCSD formed a Mill Bond Oversight Ad Hoc Committee to help ensure accountability for, and transparency of, all MLO/Bond dollars spent.

This group of 20 individuals is becoming familiar with the 2018 Mill Levy Override and Bond program and project list, monitoring the progress of the improvements and programs being implemented, ensuring MLO/Bond expenditures are in alignment with ballot language approved by voters, and periodically reporting to the Board of Education the status of MLO/Bond expenditures. DCSD received 150 applications from those interested in serving on this important committee. We sincerely thank the members of this committee for their service to our school district and community.

More information about the MLO/Bond and MBOC is available at www.dcsdk12.org/funding
Rock Canyon High School received the High School Academic Growth Award, which is given to high schools that demonstrate the highest levels of student academic growth in reading, writing and math, within each classification used by the statewide association for high school activities for the sport of football.

Mountain Vista High School’s jazz poms team won the 5A state championship.

ThunderRidge High School’s cheer team won the 5A co-ed state championship.

Legend High School’s softball team won the 5A state championship for the second year in a row.

Girls on Mountain Vista High School’s cross country team won the state championship, with player Jenna Fitzsimmons named an individual state champion.
DCSD has one of the highest graduation rates in the Denver metro area. Rates have risen steadily from 83.1% in 2010 to 90.8% in 2018.

2019: nearly $96,000,000 in scholarships

The class of 2019 earned nearly $96,000,000 in scholarships.

2018-2019: NEARLY $2,300,000 SAVED

Students and parents saved nearly $2.3 million (2018-2019) in college expenses through DCSD’s concurrent enrollment partnerships.

2018-2019 BUDGETED REVENUE $700,000,000+

DCSD is the largest employer in Douglas County
8,100 EMPLOYEES
4,400 are licensed educators

3rd largest school district in the state

EXCELLENCE
GRADUATION RATE
DCSD has one of the highest graduation rates in the Denver metro area. Rates have risen steadily from 83.1% in 2010 to 90.8% in 2018.

INNOVATION
CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT
Students and parents saved nearly $2.3 million (2018-2019) in college expenses through DCSD’s concurrent enrollment partnerships.

2019: nearly $96,000,000 in scholarships

The class of 2019 earned nearly $96,000,000 in scholarships.
Bus Drivers & Security Dispatchers Brave Bomb Cyclone Blizzard
Assisted Over 700 to Safety

March 13, 2019: The intense, powerful, and ferocious bomb cyclone blizzard pummeled Colorado and halted travel. With closed roads between Denver and Colorado Springs, Douglas County was isolated and hundreds of drivers became stranded in their vehicles. Douglas County Sheriff’s Office, the Colorado State Department of Transportation, and our DCSD Operations and Maintenance, and Transportation departments immediately organized a Rescue Task Force.

While public works employees plowed paths, school buses and patrol units followed behind to rescue stranded motorists and transport them to one of four shelters. Trip after trip saw more than 700 people taken to the shelters during the strongest storm on record. Meanwhile, DCSD Security Dispatchers Matt Soll and Dan Schulthesis worked day and night logging power outages and coordinating with the agencies of the Rescue Task Force. One dispatcher, Matt, even brought his sleeping bag and stayed the night until his 5:00 a.m. shift!

On May 30, 2019, DCSD school bus drivers received the Douglas County Sheriff’s Commendation Award for their crucial role in the rescue efforts: Terrie Norris, Irnie Johnson, Les Lilly, Chris Clarke, Holly Rolen, Kevin Hayes, Jeff Sentell, and Paula Del Rio.
The DCSD Administrator Scholarship Program honors graduating seniors from across the district, and has awarded over $175,000 in scholarships to nearly 200 Seniors since 1988. Winners are selected by their school’s administrator, and each receives a $2,000 scholarship.

Though the student’s financial need and academic merit are key criteria, students who are awarded this scholarship have often overcome personal challenges. These students show grit, determination, and resiliency.

The stories of each recipient are incredibly heartwarming. Watch them all on our YouTube channel at www.bit.ly/adminscholars2019, and have your tissues ready!

Ben Rogers
Castle View High School
Since freshman year, Ben’s paycheck supported his other siblings as his mom began her nursing career. “I did what I had to do,” he says. “I feel like I developed a good work habit.” Ben is saving for college in Alaska.

Alexia and Kelci Droogan
Chaparral High School
Fraternal twins Alexia and Kelci worked at Texas Roadhouse until 10:00 p.m. every night to help their brothers support the family after their mom passed away. Kelci says the scholarship means that “someone recognizes that we worked very hard.”

Alexandra Nance
Douglas County High School
A writer who loves short stories and is researching for a novel, Alexandra fought through anxiety and intensive therapy. She plans to study Criminal Justice and Law to, as she says, “do what I want to do and actually change the world.”

Maci Ruder
Eagle Academy
After struggling at her previous school and spending half a year in outpatient rehab, Maci made a massive change during her two years at Eagle Academy. “I went from D’s and F’s to A’s and B’s,” she says. She hopes to build on her success inside and outside the classroom to become a psychiatrist.

Juliana Joyner
Highlands Ranch High School
Kelly Corr, Activities Director at Highlands Ranch High School, describes Juliana as an ‘inferno,’ whose passion is contagious among her classmates. Juliana thanks her mom who, despite being a single parent, “definitely taught me not only the value of hard work, but still being able to have fun.”

Andrew Voss
Legend High School
Two-thirds of Andrew’s intestines were removed after birth, causing mental and physical challenges. “It’s always been like I’m just a normal kid who has to do a little bit extra to succeed,” Andrew says, finishing high school with academic excellence.

Jared Wilson
Plum Creek Academy
Jared, a Gifted Education student, is a great mathematician and plays the piano beautifully, though his day-to-day battle with autism makes recognition difficult for him. “He has a great sense of who he is and is ready to conquer the world,” says former Plum Creek Academy Principal Mary Page.

Mitch Lukes
Ponderosa High School
After a near-fatal mountain biking accident in September 2018, Mitch was hospitalized for months. He says, “I was scared when I came out of the coma. When I came back to school, Ponderosa was very supportive.” Mitch went on to graduate with his class.

Sawyer Benson
Rock Canyon High School
Sawyer was born with a rare disease that requires him to use an oxygen tank. “I’ve been interested in video game design and cybersecurity,” he says, and despite the challenges, will attend the Neumont College of Computer Science in Salt Lake City, UT.

Samantha Golden
ThunderRidge High School
Samantha spent a lot of her first semester as a senior in the hospital, cherishing moments with her dad before he passed away. Counselor Meghan Cofer explains, “She grieved, yet she was still standing strong. She was still doing what she needed to do for herself, and school, and for others.”
**When Present Meets Past**

**HRHS Hall of Fame**

Highlands Ranch High School celebrated 30 years of history by inducting the first 30 people into its Hall of Fame, honoring them for their contribution to the school, activities, and athletics. Principal Dr. Chris Page says “Highlands Ranch High School is a special place [that] deserves a special recognition for all the special people who made it so special.”

**DCHS Class of ’68 Reunion**

Fifty years after their graduation, the Douglas County High School class of 1968 returned to their old stomping-ground for a tour with Principal Tony Kappas and some current DCHS Seniors. They toured the old auditorium “The Wally,” named after the alumni’s former drama teacher, Wally Larson. “The value of friendship and value of life and life experiences,” said Kappas when asked what current high school seniors could learn from the class of 1968. “That’s what I’m hoping they’ll walk away with.”
Mountain Vista High School’s gym transformed into the Pepsi Center to grant six-year-old Chad Isaacs’ dream of becoming a professional wrestler. In the ring with Rocky Mountain Pro Wrestling, Chad bested the top wrestler in Colorado to the roar of hundreds of students chanting his name.

Over 70 Wishes in 10 Years . . .
Rock Canyon High School is where DCSD Wish Week began. Their 10 years of fundraising makes Rock Canyon the longest-standing Wish Week supporter in the country. In 2019, five-year-old Michael was their 76th recipient. His wish was to go to Disney World. Rock Canyon helped make that possible.
Recognizing Educators, Administrators, and Staff for Outstanding Work

**Paula Hans** | Public Information Officer in the Communications Office
**Department Employee of the Year**
In her position as Public Information Officer, Paula provides media response, incident support, and crisis communications for school leaders and the district on a daily basis. Her services are critical to keeping staff, families, and community members informed. An employee since 2014, she says she continues to love her work, the people she serves, and the DCSD community.

**Paul Narcisian** | Kitchen Assistant at Ranch View Middle School
**Classified Employee of the Year**
Paul says the secret to his success is treating everyone with respect. He demonstrates that at his school by remembering the name of every student in his lunch line. Paul actively nurtured relationships with staff and students alike and, despite a small kitchen staff, made sure he was ready for every breakfast and lunch.

**Paula Bishop** | HERO Teacher at Sage Canyon Elementary
**Elementary Educator of the Year**
HERO -- Honesty, Empathy, Respect, and Ownership -- teacher Paula created and implemented a curriculum that would equip the entire student body with the necessary tools to live healthy lives like self-awareness and relationship skills. Her passion is to create a safe, secure, and supportive space for children to learn and grow.

**Elena Paich** | English Teacher at Mountain Vista High School
**Secondary Educator of the Year**
Elena says that education is her heart and soul, and that she knew she wanted to be a teacher from a very young age. She is an alumnus of Mountain Vista High School, and she loves being able to teach alongside the professionals who inspired her to become a teacher.

**Mindy Persichina** | Principal at Lone Tree Elementary
**Administrator of the Year**
Mindy’s clarity on her school and their priorities has helped teachers develop and students succeed. For three consecutive years, Lone Tree Elementary has received the Governor’s Distinguished Improvement Award for exceptional student growth.
Shaping DCSD’s Future
New Strategic Plan with Community Input

Approximately 300 community members and 500 staff provided feedback about DCSD in facilitated conversations. The input received during these March Community Conversations was used to craft questions for an online survey. In early April, over 30,000 staff, community members, and students participated in that online survey. Their feedback was invaluable in outlining community priorities for the upcoming strategic plan. The new plan will launch September 2019. To find out more, go to www.dcsdk12.org/strategic-plan.

Henley Holland (Legend High School), Julea Chappa (Chaparral High School), Nicole Railsback (STEM School Highlands Ranch), and Peyton Howell (Castle View High School) were named 2019 Daniels Scholars, which provides them with a four-year, annually-renewable college scholarship.

Etash Kalra of Douglas County High School and Anila Narayana of Rock Canyon High School each received a Boettcher Foundation Scholarship, which provides them with a four-year scholarship that includes virtually all expenses to attend the Colorado school of their choice.

Legend High School’s Bryan Dickson was the first student in DCSD to pass the Certified SolidWorks Associate - Adaptive Manufacturing exam.

27 DCSD students were named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.

Douglas County High School’s Etash Kalra and Justin Kopek received National Merit Corporate Scholarships.

Brian Ma (Mountain Vista High School), Dale Kim (Rock Canyon High School), Matthew Brown (ThunderRidge High School), Michael Loomer (Chaparral High School), and Sonia Chu (Rock Canyon) were named National Merit $2,500 Scholarship recipients.

Alexis Roth (ThunderRidge High School), Aldrin Feliciano (STEM School Highlands Ranch), Sarah Gates (Ponderosa High School), and Valerie Kakos (SkyView Academy) were named National Merit College-Sponsored Scholarship recipients.

Points of Pride

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Nine DCSD teachers received the Teacher Recognition Award from the Boettcher Foundation.

★

Pine Lane Elementary Teacher Stephanie Kawamura was named a finalist for the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, which is the nation's top honor for STEM education.

★

Daniel C. Oakes High School Teacher Nadene Klein received the AVS Excellence in Science Teaching Award at the Colorado Science Conference.

★

Castle View High School Teacher and Soccer Coach Nicole Rodriguez was selected to speak at the Sporting Chance Forum in Paris, France, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

School Directory

**Castle View High School**

- Academy Charter School
- Aspen View Academy
- Castle Rock Middle School
- Clear Sky Elementary
- Larkspur Elementary
- Meadow View Elementary
- Sedalia Elementary
- Soaring Hawk Elementary

**Chaparral High School**

- American Academy - Lincoln Meadows
- American Academy - Motsenbocker Challenge to Excellence Charter School
- Cherokee Trail Elementary
- Global Village Academy
- Mammoth Heights Elementary
- North Star Academy
- Parker Core Knowledge
- Parker Performing Arts
- Pine Grove Elementary
- Pine Lane Elementary
- Prairie Crossing Elementary
- Sierra Middle School

**Douglas County High School**

- Castle Rock Elementary
- Cherry Valley Elementary
- Flagstone Elementary
- Mesa Middle School
- Renaissance Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School
- Renaissance Secondary School
- Rock Ridge Elementary
- Sage Canyon Elementary
- South Ridge Elementary
- World Compass Academy

**Highlands Ranch High School**

- Ascent Classical Academy
- Acres Green Elementary
- Arrowwood Elementary
- Cougar Run Elementary
- Cresthill Middle School
- Eagle Ridge Elementary
- Fox Creek Elementary
- Lone Tree Elementary
- Platte River Academy
- SkyView Academy

**Legend High School**

- Cimarron Middle School
- Frontier Valley Elementary
- Gold Rush Elementary
- Iron Horse Elementary
- Pioneer Elementary

**Mountain Vista High School**

- Bear Canyon Elementary
- Ben Franklin Academy
- Copper Mesa Elementary
- Heritage Elementary
- Mountain Ridge Middle School
- Northridge Elementary
- Sand Creek Elementary
- STEM School Highlands Ranch
- Summit View Elementary

**Ponderosa High School**

- Franktown Elementary
- Legacy Point Elementary
- Leman Academy of Excellence
- Mountain View Elementary
- Northeast Elementary
- Sagewood Middle School
Rock Canyon High School
American Academy - Castle Pines
Buffalo Ridge Elementary
DCS Montessori
Redstone Elementary
Rocky Heights Middle School
Timber Trail Elementary
Wildcat Mountain Elementary

ThunderRidge High School
Coyote Creek Elementary
Eldorado Elementary
Ranch View Middle School
Roxborough Intermediate School
Roxborough Primary School
Saddle Ranch Elementary
Stone Mountain Elementary
Trailblazer Elementary

Alternative Schools
Bridge Program
DC Oakes High School
DC Student Support Center
Eagle Academy
eDCSD Online
HOPE Online
Plum Creek Academy

Materials on pages two and three courtesy of Douglas County Libraries, Archives and Local History, Castle Rock, Colorado:

Castle Rock from "The Rock" (1950-59), 2004:036:0002
DCSS Prom Court and Float (1958), 2008:012:0002:0015:0002
Douglas County High School Building (1907-1909), 1996:050
Douglas County High School Building (1961), 2015:052:000
Students outside the Sedalia school (1891-1912), 1992:001:0687:0561
Douglas County News (Castle Rock, CO), 24 April 1958. Colorado

Historic Newspapers Collection. Colorado State Library.


People sitting on some rocks (1900-1916), 1993:005:0046:0003
Willed with horse (1920-1930), 1993:005:0067:0001

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1992.001.0687.0561
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#UnityofPurpose

Our unity of purpose is to provide an educational foundation that allows each student to reach his or her individual potential while striving to maximize the potential of every student to pursue his or her chosen endeavor in society, including but not limited to postsecondary education, career, or military service.

Join the conversation
https://tinyurl.com/ConnectWithDCSD

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