Platform for Excellent Schools

College Prep for All – Blue School in SW Denver

“The skills that many students do not achieve mastery of when they are in middle school are the same skills that they fail to display when they arrive at the doorsteps of college. Even though they have met the requirements for high school graduation, they remain profoundly limited in their abilities to do college-level academic work, in many ways because of what they did not learn in middle school.” - NYC CEJ Report

What Do We Want?

1. College preparatory curriculum and culture: All middle and high school students must have high-quality courses, including passing Algebra in the 8th grade, in order to meet the needs of high school, college and careers. Our middle schools must embrace and promote college going expectations and culture for all students, regardless of income or race.

2. Highly effective principals and teachers: Successful schools have principals and teachers who are highly effective, have high expectations and believe in the intellectual capacity of students of color. They are accountable for the academic growth and success of all students as they prepare them for college and careers. All principals and teachers must be given support and professional development in a timely and ongoing way, to ensure student success in the classroom.

3. Healthy student environment & safe schools: Students and parents must have safe and caring schools that support their social and emotional well-being. School environments must celebrate and honor all peoples’ real histories, cultures and contributions. Discipline must no longer be used to push low-performing students of color out of school and into the streets.

4. Support strong public schools - no more charters!

How Do We Get There? [College Prep for All and Blue Schools in SW Denver]

1. Quality Extended Learning Time: High achieving middle and high schools often utilize a longer school day and year. This additional time allows students who are behind (by 70%) to reach grade level and above. This quality time allows for student development and a rich/supportive student environment - by including the arts, sports, internships, tutoring and ELA supports.

2. Colorado Standards: The Colorado Standards will bring our students’ education up to the 21st century and if fully implemented, help to ensure that students of color in particular, are well prepared for college. We demand college prep for all students regardless of zip code and that all schools in SWD are Blue Schools

3. Timely Data and Prompt Academic Interventions: Using timely data to monitor student progress and teacher effectiveness is a critical component of highly effective schools. Data enables schools to quickly identify and address needed interventions and supports for both students and teachers.

4. Restorative Justice: Every school should have Restorative Justice (RJ) and an RJ Coordinator for quality implementation. RJ replaces harsh zero tolerance practices, racial disparities in discipline and the overuse of police for minor misbehavior. RJ positively improves attendance, tardiness, achievement and graduation rates.

5. Safe & Healthy Schools include: Respect for all peoples, Wrap-around clinics at all schools for students and their families, Fresh, healthy and equitable school food, Organized physical education – by reinstating PE, Social and emotional well-being, Free transportation for ELT and all those who need it.

6. Quality ECE for all children: All low-income children of color should have access [transportation as needed] to free ECE that supports the social and emotional well being of the child, with good nutrition, developmental skills and age appropriate interventions. All children should arrive in Kindergarten prepared and ready to learn.

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