Strategic Plan

January 2017

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Introduction from the CEO

When DSST was created in 2003, the model was viewed as somewhat revolutionary. A racially and socio-economically integrated school, where all kids would graduate admitted to a four-year college. An environment that focused as much on character as it did on academics. A high school program that was deliberately rigorous, pushing all students to take higher level math and science, setting them up for success in STEM fields. A commitment to all students receiving a laptop, so that the STEM experience would emphasize technology. Though many believed these elements were too ambitious or unrealistic, it proved to be a successful combination.

Today, DSST still adheres to these practices, however, they are no longer cutting edge—STEM programs have become somewhat commonplace, laptops are often an expectation, and character education is ubiquitous. While it is still true that DSST schools excel in these areas, producing outcomes that typically exceed our peers, our model is no longer unusual—with one exception: Integrated Schools.

Over the last ten years, experts agree that one of the most impactful strategies to close the achievement gap is school integration. Yet since 1988, schools in the U.S. have re-segregated at an alarming rate. Despite public school choice efforts, the demographics of schools almost universally follow the footprint of neighborhoods. Where incomes are high, school achievement is high too. Three Denver Public Schools were closed in the last two years for poor performance—and unsurprisingly, all three schools were located in low-income neighborhoods. If housing patterns are allowed to continue to determine segregated school enrollment, systemically closing the achievement gap will be very challenging.

We believe that the most impactful, future-focused path DSST can take is not a new one. The power of integration, repeatedly confirmed in numerous studies, fosters student results that embolden us to take an even stronger stance. In recent years, while pursuing available DPS buildings, we fell into the trap of believing: If you build it, they will come. However we have learned that the DSST name isn't sufficient to create integrated schools in communities that have experienced persistent, generational school failure. Our brand alone isn't enough to overcome the forces of housing segregation.

The benefits of integrated schools and the obstacles they face aren't new—but our resolve to put integration at the center of our strategic plan is. We will carefully consider facility placements to ensure we are not contributing to segregation. We will push for policies at the local, state and national level that promote school integration. We will help our students and families understand—and have voice in creating—intentionally diverse school communities. We will double-down on our efforts to create a diverse, inclusive team.

School integration, combined with commitments to push our academic program to get better, to revisit our approach to STEM education, to more consistently cultivate a values-driven community, and to move beyond college access to college completion—we believe this strategic plan represents the most important work in public education today.

-- Bill Kurtz, CEO of DSST Public Schools

Executive Summary

DSST Public Schools was created to end educational inequity in Denver. Building from the success of the original Denver School of Science and Technology in Stapleton, DSST Public Schools was created to scale those results to thousands of students across Denver in pursuit of a bold mission:

DSST Public Schools transforms urban public education by eliminating educational inequity and preparing all students for success in college and the 21st century.

When its currently approved charters are all fully enrolled in 2026, DSST will be providing 10,750 Denver Public Schools students a high quality education at 22 schools and producing 1,200 college ready graduates each year. This growth is a major step towards accomplishing this mission.

Between now and the fall of 2020, DSST will open six new schools and four new DPS campuses. In preparation for this expansion, the DSST Strategic Plan defines the organization's key outcomes and identifies the most impactful strategies to achieve them at scale. A major output of this plan is the clarification and refinement of the DSST Core Model, the programming and practices that establish what it means to be a DSST school. The plan defines four core model elements and articulates a set of strategies to improve network results for each:

- Academic Preparedness - Recommit to proven processes producing academic excellence with an express emphasis on updating STEM strategies.
- Values Development - Recommit and deepen efforts to base organizational culture on values, and strengthen vision and systems to deepen and measure student values development.
- College Success - Better prepare our students and families for a college experience by building skills, knowledge and experiences while also advocating for the most advantageous college match possible.
- Integrated Schools - Increase diversity by changing network strategies for new campuses, rethinking student recruitment at current campuses, and providing schools greater flexibility and resources to differentiate programming based on their community.

In addition to core model strategies, the plan also identified four areas where investment and improvement would yield the greatest impact on the organization's ability to scale and execute. These organizational initiatives and their accompanying strategies are:

- Network Clarity – Establish clear processes, decision rights and resource allocations that empower leaders and support the implementation of the DSST Core Model.
- Continuous Improvement – Implement systems and processes to support data-driven methodology for setting targets, forecasting, and measuring results against key metrics that enable staff to learn, act, and improve.
- People Development – Strengthen leadership development, build better professional development resources, and create systems to assist team members in directing their career path.
- Equity and Inclusion – Build an inclusive team where individuals feel valued for their unique contributions and strengthen school communities by supporting individual identity development.

This strategic plan will drive organizational change that will enable better student results as DSST grows. This chart summarizes the plan's impact by showing the DSST standard for each core model element and the results that successful execution of the strategic plan will produce.

	DSST Standard	June 2016 Actual	June 2020 Target
DPS Schools	NA	12	18
Total Enrollment	NA	4,200	7,200
Academic Preparedness	Average SAT score of 1130+	1140*	1130
	80%+ of students SAT score 1010+, college readiness standard	72%*	78%
Values Development	Staff core values survey score 6.0+	5.81	6.0
	Student values proficiency measure TBD	NA	TBD
College Success	60%+ grads enrolled at college with 65%+ graduation rate	28%	50%
	25%+ grads enrolled at selective college	10%	20%
Integrated Schools	All schools between 40-70% FRL	3 of 10	13 of 18

*Relies on conversion of ACT results into SAT results. 2017 is first year all Colorado high school juniors will take SAT instead of ACT.

Strategic Planning Overview

Origin and Scope
In the spring of 2015, the DPS school board approved charters for eight new DSST schools on four new campuses. In the fall of 2015, the DSST leadership team realized that the pace and scope of change facing the organization created challenges and opportunities beyond what its traditional annual strategic initiative process could effectively address. They decided that the organization's growth warranted a new strategic plan to ensure DSST was able to continue getting better at the same time it was getting much bigger. With approval from the DSST board, a strategic planning process was launched at the start of 2016 with the objective of producing a plan to establish the organization's key priorities and strategies by the start of 2017.

The scope of this effort was well defined, by explicitly naming both what would and would not be impacted by the final plan. What would not be affected:
* DSST's mission: *DSST Public Schools transforms urban public education by eliminating educational inequity and preparing all students for success in college and the 21st century.*
* DSST's core values: *Integrity, Respect, Courage, Responsibility, Curiosity, and Doing Your Best*
* Operating only middle schools and high schools serving grades 6-12
* Commitment to fulfilling DSST's already approved charters with DPS on the following timetable:

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Middle Schools	7	7	9	11	11	11	11
High Schools	5	6	6	7	7	9	11
Total Schools	**12**	**13**	**15**	**18**	**18**	**20**	**22**

* Commitment to continue pursuing additional growth opportunities, including expansion to other metro districts such as Aurora. (Current discussions with APS would have first campus opening in fall of 2019. A second campus could open in 2021.)
* Commitment to operating within a financial model that requires only public funding plus $200 per student in private fundraising annually once all campuses are fully built out.

Operating within those parameters still left a great deal for the planning effort to assess and potentially change. The highest priority questions for the plan:
* What is the DSST core model—what defines a DSST school?
* What are the critical outcomes DSST is committed to achieve?
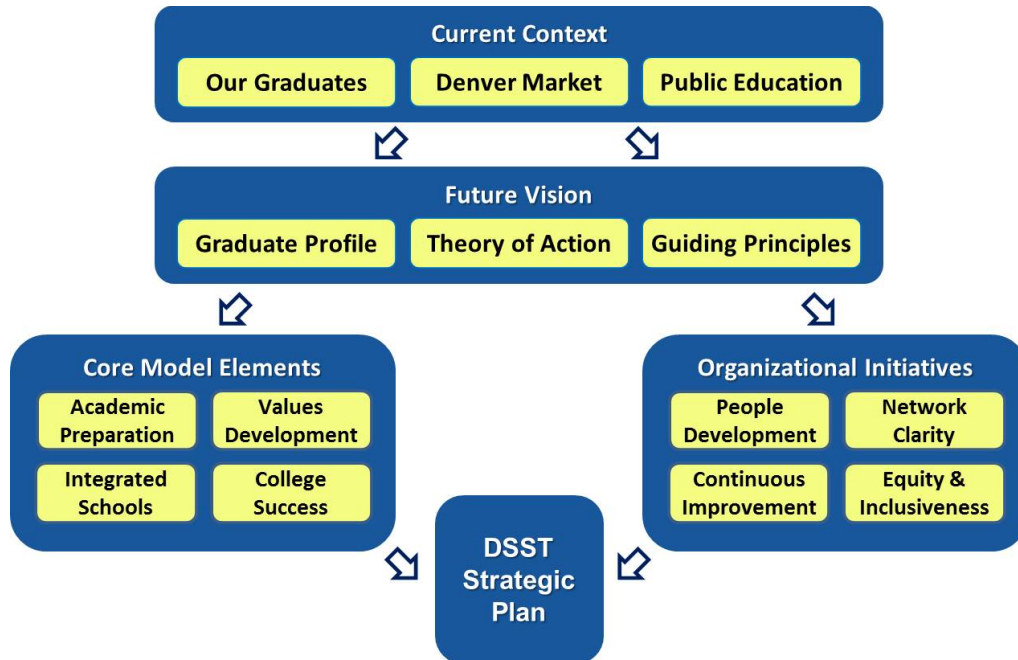* What are the best strategies to produce those outcomes?

The answers to those questions would form a roadmap for the organization specifying the highest priority actions for the next three years.

Approach
While the overall objective and scope of the plan was clear and constant from the start, the process that was followed to pursue that objective went through several different iterations and refinements over the course of the project. However all of them were grounded in the same basic approach:

1. Assess the current challenges DSST faces internally and in the education sector
2. Understand the lessons learned from DSST's first twelve years
3. Refine the vision for who DSST wants to be and what DSST wants to achieve
4. Craft a set of strategies to fulfill that vision within DSST's current context

The below diagram represents the conceptual approach that was followed to produce the final plan:

Current Context
- Our Graduates
- Denver Market
- Public Education

Future Vision
- Graduate Profile
- Theory of Action
- Guiding Principles

Core Model Elements
- Academic Preparation
- Values Development
- Integrated Schools
- College Success

Organizational Initiatives
- People Development
- Network Clarity
- Continuous Improvement
- Equity & Inclusiveness

DSST Strategic Plan

The rest of this document uses this framework to capture the findings and conclusions of the strategic planning process.
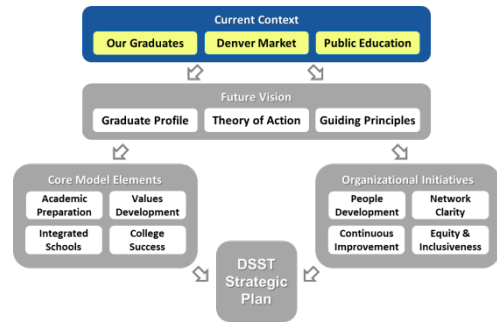
Current Context

Designing a strategy for DSST's future success required a close examination of the organization's current context with regards to the job market its graduates will face, the challenges of the public education, and the preferences of its prospective families in Denver.

Our Graduates
The following are some of the salient factors shaping the world DSST's graduates will enter:

- There is a dramatic inequality of opportunity in this country leading to two Americas
- This division has been revealed most recently through a series of incidents of police violence and subsequent protest and an extremely polarizing 2016 presidential campaign
- The value of a college degree in the 21st century knowledge economy has never been greater, reflected in the fact that 74% of new jobs in Colorado will require post-secondary education
- STEM jobs are the jobs of the future – both in terms of quantity, quality and economically, with 75% of new jobs in Colorado over the next 10 years requiring some STEM knowledge
- A strong liberal arts background is important to both STEM and non-STEM careers, as reading, analyzing, writing and communicating are all key components of the 21st century knowledge economy

U.S. Public Education
The planning process also identified the significant challenges within the local and national public education landscape:

- Performance at Scale – Very few school networks nationwide produce outstanding academic results while developing strong values and identities for students, and those few still struggle to produce graduates who achieve high rates of college success
- Complexity of schooling – The number and variability of the inputs, outputs and strategies at work in schools today make it a very complicated operation that is easy to get wrong and difficult to get right
- Scarcity of talent – High demand combined with limited public education funding make it difficult to hire staff in sufficient quantity and with the skills and experience to be immediately effective
- Unsustainability – High workloads, stagnant low wages, and inadequate support has produced a high rate of turnover in public education, further shrinking an already limited talent pool
- Social inequity - Centuries of systemic oppression means that students from non-dominant races and cultures have needs and challenges that exceed those of more affluent and privileged communities, while increased segregation makes it more difficult to create integrated schools, the most effective model for eliminating this opportunity gap

Market Research

In addition to these high level insights, DSST engaged Corona Insights, a market research firm, to conduct surveys in order to 1) understand what families are looking for when choosing a school; 2) understand what people know and think of DSST Public Schools; and 3)understand how alumni feel about their time at DSST. Survey details were as follows:

Survey Subjects	Number of Available Email Addresses	Number of Completed Surveys	Response Rate
Current DSST Families	4,698	918	21%
Prospective Families from DPS	14,027	1,023	8%
DSST Alumni	482	87	18%

Perceptions of DSST by Respondent Group

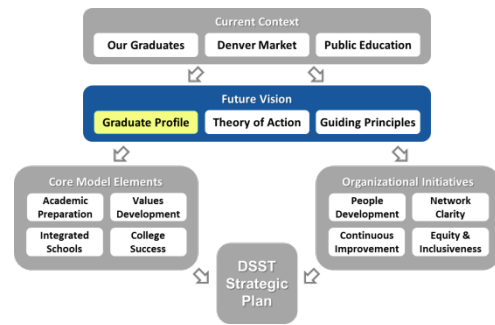**DPS Families**

DSST Families

DSST Alumni

Core Model Implications

1) *Academic Preparedness:* High-quality teaching tailored to students' unique needs was the most important characteristic for all families surveyed.

2) *Values:* Focus on character and values development was ranked as extremely important by all groups, (65%-77%, depending on sub group)
3) *Integrated Schools:* We saw large variances by subgroup in how respondents ranked the importance of "the school's student body represents a variety of races, ethnicities, and cultures." Black and Hispanic families, and those who identified as Other, are more likely than their white counterparts to indicate this as extremely important – with black families much more likely to than any other race/ethnicity.
4) *College Success:* 100% college acceptance was ranked 6th out of 8 characteristics presented, but we saw differences by subgroup:
   - DSST families are more likely than their DPS counterparts to rate this "extremely important".
   - Black and Hispanic families, and those that identified as Other, are more likely than their White counterparts to indicate this.
   - Families with income below $50K also value this characteristic more in a school.
5) *Enrichment:* While DPS and DSST families felt similarly about **clubs** and **athletics**, DPS families valued **arts** and **foreign languages** more. As income increased, the importance of extra-curricular activities tended to increase.

Current Context
Our Graduates | Denver Market | Public Education

Future Vision
Graduate Profile | Theory of Action | Guiding Principles

Core Model Elements
Academic Preparation | Values Development
Integrated Schools | College Success

Organizational Initiatives
People Development | Network Clarity
Continuous Improvement | Equity & Inclusiveness

DSST Strategic Plan

Future Vision - Graduate Profile

What should a DSST graduate be equipped with when they graduate? This was a fundamental question for the strategic plan, as an effective strategy can only be crafted if the desired outcome is clearly defined. The answer is captured in the DSST graduate profile:

DSST aspires to develop graduates with a strong sense of values, a deep understanding of their identity, and the foundational skills and habits to become the best versions of themselves, lead fulfilling lives, and make a contribution to the human story. This will be accomplished this by developing graduates who:

- *Understand their identity*
    a. *Graduates will further understand their own identity and develop self-awareness of themselves as an individual and as a member of their community*
    b. *Graduates will possess an awareness of others, empathy for others, respect different opinions and demonstrate a critical consciousness of the world around them*
- *Lead values-driven lives*
    a. *Graduates will understand the importance of living a values-driven life*
    b. *Graduates will display an ability to live the DSST core values of respect, responsibility, curiosity, courage, integrity and doing your best*
    c. *Graduates will possess a capacity to identify and consistently live their own values*
- *Are prepared for, accepted into, and complete four year colleges or are career ready*
    a. *Graduates will demonstrate habits of success that will enable them to complete college and/or be successful in their career*
    b. *Graduates will possess the academic content knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college and career*
    c. *[Reserved for school-specific focus]*
- *Possess the skills needed for 21st century success*
    a. *Graduates will exhibit the creative, analytical, communication, and technological skills to be able to solve the increasingly complex problems of society*
    b. *[Reserved for school-specific focus]*
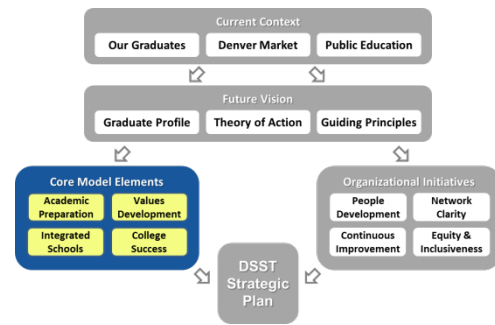
Core Model Elements

What is the right DSST education model to accomplish this graduate profile? What are the most impactful school model elements necessary to produce such graduates? These elements would provide the backbone of the DSST Core Model, essentially what it means to be a DSST school. In establishing these elements, a difficult balance had to be struck between the allure of a wide range of desirable school programming and the constraints of limited resources and a need for focus.

Seven potential core model elements were evaluated, and ultimately four were chosen that represent the specific outcomes DSST is truly committed to achieving. While four elements require significantly more effort that just one, all four are a close strategic fit—success in any one area has synergistic benefits for the other three. The following is an explanation of each element—their definition, the rationale for how they relate to DSST's mission, and the proposed standard to be achieved in one or more key metrics.

Academic Preparedness through STEM	
Definition	DSST students achieve proficiency in the content and academic skills needed to be successful in college and their postsecondary experience with an emphasis on STEM preparation.
Rationale	In order to get to and through college and lead fulfilling lives including the ability to choose a career in the STEM field, students need to be prepared academically.
Standards	• Network average SAT score of 1130 or higher • 80% of graduates meeting or exceeding the college ready SAT benchmark score of 1010

Values Development	
Definition	DSST school culture is rooted in our shared core values, an essential element of both effective school communities and individual student development. Upon graduation students will demonstrate the ability to live the DSST core values of respect, responsibility, curiosity, courage, integrity and doing your best, and possess the capacity to identify and consistently live their own values.
Rationale	Values development is a critical part of educating young people and at the core of our students' happiness and overall success.
Standards	• Staff survey response of 6 or higher (on 7 point scale) to: "DSST is an authentically driven core value organization" • New metric(s) needed to measure student value and identity development. To be designed, piloted, and implemented as part of strategic plan execution.

College Success	
Definition	DSST schools prepare all students for success in college and the 21st century.
Rationale	College success provides students opportunities to access jobs and be more engaged in their work. More than 80% of the jobs in Colorado that allow a family of two adults

|	(one working) and one child to earn a living wage require at least a bachelor's degree, and 75% of these jobs will be in STEM. Students with college degrees are less likely to be unemployed and on average earn double the salary of high school graduates.
Standards	• 60% of each DSST graduating class enrolls in a college with greater than 65% graduation rate • 20% of each DSST graduating class enrolls in a selective college

Integrated Schools	
Definition	DSST schools are inclusive and diverse, serving a student population that mirrors Denver as a whole.
Rationale	Integrated schools have been proven to produce the best outcomes for all children, yet political, geographical and social trends increasingly segregate communities. Purposefully cultivating a diverse student body prepares students for successful careers and lives in an increasingly diverse nation.
Standards	• The percentage of FRL students at every DSST school is between 40% and 70%. • For the DSST network, all subgroups (SpEd, FRL, ELL, and Race) are within 10% of DPS district average.
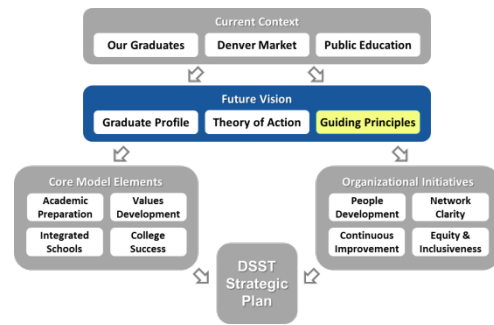
Future Vision - Guiding Principles

The graduate profile helps define *what* DSST seeks to achieve. The guiding principles provide the foundation to strengthen *how* the organization pursues its mission. Identifying these principles required articulating the key beliefs and insights that have guided the organization since its founding and that have been refined through DSST's first twelve years of operation. These guiding principles are:

- High Expectations and Support – This proven strategy, which applies not only to classroom instruction, but also to staff development and school coaching, requires clarity on standards, measurement, scope, and support techniques
- Proven Strategies – The combination of the high difficulty of educating students effectively and the high stakes of public education necessitates an emphasis on gathering and deploying proven strategies with high probability of success
- Coordinated Success – The highest and most equitable collective results are achieved by a coordinated network that raises the performance floor for its schools while removing the ceiling, not a loose configuration of schools operating independently
- Power of Focus – It is much easier to be consistently great at a few things than many, so the best results will be achieved by people and teams with a clear focus allowing specialization
- Primacy of People – Even the most refined strategy is useless without successful execution, which requires hiring mission-committed employees and developing their capacity to both implement and improve those strategies over time
- Execution Precedes Innovation – Organizational improvement requires a disciplined innovation process best performed by those who have proven the capability to exceed standards and understand the limitations of current practices
- Equitable Outcomes - Because students have such varying different needs, they require differentiated resources to produce the equitable outcome of all students meeting our graduate profile
- Sustainable Finances – Private funds can supplement capacity, but a sustainable public education provider must be able to operate its core model solely from government funding
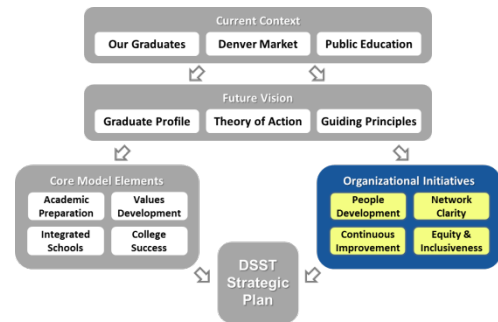
Organizational Initiatives

Just as with the core model elements, identifying the most impactful ways to enhance how DSST operates required analysis and prioritization. The guiding principles helped determine that these four initiatives would provide the greatest leverage to improve DSST's execution:

Network Clarity	
Description	The way key decisions are made and financial resources are allocated is transparent and clear to all network stakeholders.
Rationale	There is probably no greater frustration for employees than having to navigate the politics and confusion caused by misaligned leaders. Even the slightest bit of daylight between network leadership can impact culture and cause significant disruption for staff.
Goals	• DSST core model and annual school planning process is documented, understood, and followed by school and home office directors • Decisions are predictable, consistent and timely based on clearly defined decision rights.

Continuous Improvement	
Description	For all key outcomes, DSST follows a consistent data-driven methodology for setting targets, forecasting, and measuring results that enables staff to learn, act, and improve.
Rationale	Organizations don't get the results they expect, they get those they inspect. Successful strategy execution requires defining success upfront and then monitoring performance to ensure it meets or exceeds expectations.
Goals	• Lead measures and forecasting exist for all key metrics to alert metric owners to potential issues and provide ability for leadership to respond and adapt • Integration with decision rights provides schools discretion and innovation where warranted by performance

People Development	
Description	By improving the effectiveness of leaders, teachers, and staff, high quality professional development produces two mutually reinforcing benefits: greater staff retention and better student outcomes.
Rationale	• There is a teacher and leader shortage in education nationally • People leave managers, not organizations • Teaching effectiveness is huge predictor of student results
Goals	• Increase year over year staff retention from 80% to 85% • 80% of staff agree or strongly agree – "This year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow at DSST" • EOY survey scores 5.0 on "I am able to lead a fulfilling life" (current, 4.77) • 65% of all leadership roles filled by internal hires

| Equity and Inclusiveness	
Description	Ensure that DSST fosters an inclusive community that encourages and supports each person to become the best version of themselves.
Rationale	Ensuring that individuals feel a sense of belonging regardless of background is fundamental to DSST's view of the human condition: *Each human being strives to be fully known and affirmed for who they uniquely are, and to make a positive contribution to the human story.*
Goal	All DSST teams (at schools or the Home Office) reflect our goal for integrated school communities of at least 40% identifying as diverse, with interim target of 25% by 2020.
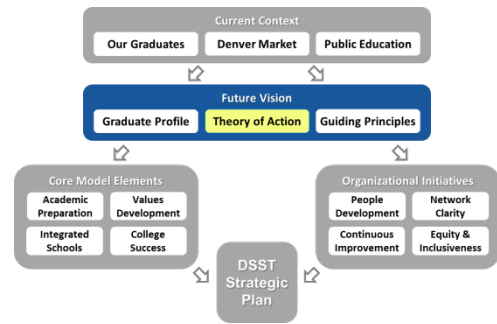
Future Vision - Theory of Action

The challenge of meeting the standards for all four core model elements given DSST's current context highlighted the need for alignment on how to best scale and operate the network. Answering questions such as what is the optimal level of centralization within the network or what are the most impactful investments to drive better student performance required a cohesive vision for both growth and execution. Extensive back and forth discussion evaluating the merits and feasibility of different approaches eventually produced a theory of action. This simple statement captures the best thinking of the management team of how to pursue impactful and successful change:

If DSST creates a school model based on its four core model elements, refines that model through data-driven continuous improvement, and develops exceptional people and teams to sustainably execute that model, this will produce world-class, consistent, equitable student outcomes at scale.

This relatively straightforward conjecture may not appear very disruptive, but its power comes from integrating numerous beliefs, insights, and hard won experience into a concise statement that is clear and prescriptive. Articulating this theory reinforced the prioritization of the plan's organizational initiatives and provided a framework for the strategic recommendations of the plan.
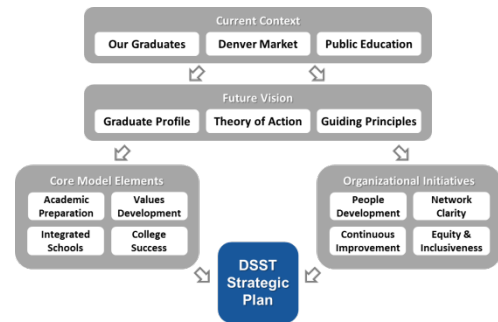
DSST Strategic Plan

Turning insights into strategies that produce real world results is the ultimate aim of the strategic plan. The four core model elements and four organizational initiatives identified through the planning process are all listed below. Each core model element listing contains the main issues identified, the strategies to address them, and the measurable outcomes. For the organizational initiatives, each entry lists the strategies to be followed, the deliverables to be produced, and the organizational impacts expected.

Core Model Strategies

Academic Preparedness through STEM	
Issues	• Lack of clarity in our current academic model leading to inconsistent results and/or inefficiencies • STEM programming is not robust nor relevant in all grade levels and curriculum
Strategies	• Clearly define an academic model that supports all core elements • Update STEM programming to be robust and relevant • Ensure academic programming addresses needs of ELL, SPED, and gifted students
Expected Outcomes	• Average SAT score of 1130+; 80% of students higher than 1010 (including all sub-groups) • CMAS MGP of 70+ for both Math and ELA

Values Development	
Issues	• Values are inconsistently integrated with staff culture • Our schools have been less consistent building culture, discipline and systems on our values
Strategies	• Strengthen values foundation of our staff culture • Center school culture and discipline systems in our values • Create a vision for student values development and identity development
Expected Outcomes	• Stronger staff culture that is both inclusive and more deeply values-centered, reflected in staff core value survey exceeding 6.0 on 7 point scale • School culture and systems increasingly centered on values, not on compliance and strict and that encourage strong identity discovery and development • Stronger student development of their own values such that they live values-driven lives, captured by to be developed metric

College Success	
Issues	• Lack of college-going culture throughout schools resulting in lack of alignment in college skills building opportunities in and outside of school day, missed opportunities in matching students to best-fit schools, decreasing persistence to and through college. • Six year college graduation rate decreasing by @ 10% each year (from peak of 57% in 2014)

Strategies	• Increase quality and capacity of college placement efforts, focusing on mindset of inform-advocate-support in college application counselling which requires using data to ensure students and families know challenges and opportunities of choices. • Centralize accountability in order to improve support and ensure equity across campuses. • Create aligned vision and supports for whole school college going culture and restructure single college success team versus individual college placement, summer programs, and internships teams. • Explore alternative pathways and partnerships that might better serve students who are enrolled at local colleges and universities where the graduation rate is less than 65%
Expected Outcomes	• Increase enrollment at selective colleges to 20% • Increase enrollment to colleges with graduation rates over 65% to 50%

Integrated Schools	
Issues	• FRL % increased at every DSST school from 2014 to 2015 • 4 of 7 DSST campuses are over 70% FRL, exceeding both the DPS average and the element's definition of economic diversity
Strategies	Address three different areas: Policy, Perception, and Programming • Improve marketing and recruitment (Perception) • Change evaluation process for new campuses (Policy) • Build stronger school cultures that value inclusion and working through differences (Programming) • Add strategies and resources for schools to tailor programming to diverse communities (Programming)
Expected Outcomes	• Schools over 70% FRL decrease FRL by 3% a year • Integrated Schools maintain their demographics and increase wait list length by 10% per year

Organizational Strategies

Network Clarity	
Strategies	• Document core model and implement annual school planning process to identify what programming schools are expected to follow, what standards they need to meet, and how school designs are reviewed and approved • Revenue allocation (net of CMO fees) driven by student need
Deliverables	• RAPID roles are documented and published for all significant recurring decisions • Revenue allocation policy driven by student need is documented and updated in advance of annual budgeting process • A school planning process that integrates planning efforts and decision rights into cohesive process
Impact	• Faster and better decisions involving less effort and escalation • Increased ownership of decisions – improving performance and accountability. • Increased resources directed to students with SpEd, ELL, social/emotional, and gifted needs, narrowing or eliminating sub-group gaps from school achievement averages.

Continuous Improvement	
Strategies	• Refine academic data vision and increase support and development for school leaders • Create data-driven approaches to monitor values development, student attrition, college success, and all home office functions • Increase capacity of data team to oversee surveys, provide more training and enhance dashboards
Deliverables	• Network report card that captures organization results across school and home office functions • Integration of report card components into new and existing Polaris dashboards
Impact	• Strengthening data culture--faster awareness of and response to performance issues even as size and complexity of network grows • Enhanced ability to meet core model and other key network performance targets

People Development	
Strategies	• Build the capacity of current leaders to better coach and manage team members in order to increase fulfillment, job satisfaction and retention rates • Build stronger leadership teams by standardizing the expectations of school based leadership roles in order to focus on the primacy of people development, resulting in greater sustainability for our school leaders • Invest in leadership development programs and strategies to better prepare high potential team members to advance and build our leadership pipeline • Create clearer career pathways for all staff by expanding and centralizing opportunities for professional development aligned to roadmaps for advancement
Deliverables	• Double the amount of time spent on leadership development, management, soft skills training with current DSST leaders (School Directors, Associate School Directors, Directors of Curriculum and Instruction, Deans)

	• Expanded, aligned leadership development programs for high potential staff • Creation of the "Arc of Development," a centralized system that integrates performance and development opportunities for each team member
Impact	• School teams increase their effectiveness, fulfillment, and retention • A deeper bench of leaders to enable network growth

Equity and Inclusiveness	
Strategies	• Clearly articulate our core beliefs about equity and inclusiveness and ensure that these beliefs are woven throughout the organization in everything that we do • Better prepare and train our team to be culturally responsive and understand the expectations of working in integrated schools • Increase the presence of diverse perspectives on our teams through intentional recruitment, hiring and retention practices
Deliverables	• Articulation of DSST core beliefs on equity and inclusiveness • Creation of equity scorecard • Identity development curriculum • Diversity recruitment plan
Impact	• Build a more inclusive organization to better lead and cultivate integrated schools. • Improve the overall performance of the organization by better serving students

Financial Model

A requirement throughout the strategic planning process was that the final set of strategies must be consistent with a sustainable financial model. A high-level consolidated income statement of that model is depicted below. It is based on a scenario where in FY 2026, when all current DPS charters are all fully built out, the DSST network is essentially financially breakeven with only $200 per student (in 2016 dollars) of private fundraising.

(in thousands)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Revenue										
Fundraising	980	1,140	1,339	1,578	1,801	2,003	2,203	2,374	2,531	2,633
Student Revenue	829	982	1,135	1,364	1,530	1,732	1,883	2,069	2,179	2,306
Governmental Revenue	48,507	56,068	66,185	77,292	88,968	95,998	105,565	113,694	121,187	126,017
Misc Revenue	444	461	481	504	525	546	567	586	605	621
	50,760	58,652	69,141	80,738	92,825	100,280	110,219	118,724	126,503	131,577
Expenses										
Salaries	27,961	32,488	38,753	45,046	50,789	56,028	61,004	65,356	68,110	69,036
Additional Pay	1,042	1,204	1,402	1,634	1,847	2,039	2,228	2,388	2,535	2,630
Payroll Taxes & Benefits	8,715	10,087	12,065	14,028	15,725	17,231	18,664	19,879	20,579	20,724
Discretionary	6,019	6,922	8,114	9,498	10,567	11,672	12,839	13,773	14,606	15,134
DPS Expenses	6,424	7,564	8,986	10,706	12,624	14,326	15,761	16,962	18,071	18,791
Facility & Technology	3,051	3,348	4,036	4,578	4,735	4,652	4,982	4,944	4,879	4,853
Other	104	122	144	170	194	215	237	256	274	286
Strategic Plan	-	1,189	1,329	1,485	1,622	-	-	-	-	-
	53,316	62,925	74,829	87,145	98,103	106,162	115,714	123,559	129,055	131,454
Net Income	(2,556)	(4,273)	(5,688)	(6,407)	(5,278)	(5,883)	(5,496)	(4,835)	(2,552)	123

The model was derived from a high level, long-term forecast (LTF). The LTF is driven by the following assumptions:

- Annual inflation is 2.0%. This drives the majority of other revenue and expense growth assumptions.
- Middle and high schools have built-out enrollments of 457 and 525, respectively.
- Annual fundraising (primarily generated by Slice of Pi) is set at $200/student and increases with inflation.
- All existing campuses add a grade a year until they are fully built out. Campuses 8 & 9 open in the fall of 2018 and campuses 10 & 11 open in the fall of 2019. No other additional campuses are included.
- 85% of Capital Construction funding is going toward DPS facility use fees. The remainder goes toward capital construction projects. The 85% figure declines by 1% annually to reflect a formula that caps the amount of these funds DPS allows to be applied to facility fees.
- HO department budgets were set by reviewing 2017 budgeted numbers and making judgments on what expenses were expected to continue and how they will grow over time.
- Restricted grant revenue is excluded from the forecast.
- Center Programs are excluded from the forecast. The assumption is that their costs will continue to be offset by their enrollment and the resources received from DPS.
- Middle and high school staffing starts based on 2017 actual staffing levels, which are above the base school staffing model. Once fully built-out, all schools transition to a hypothetical staffing model that increases SpEd staffing in anticipation of higher SpEd enrollment.
- From 2025 to 2026, the 2 apprentice teachers and the 1 SDiT per school are eliminated as the network transitions its staffing needs to full build out.

- HO staffing increases by 33 FTEs between 2017 and 2026. Increases are timed to keep home office capacity at target ratio to student population one year ahead of actual student growth.
- The net income shown in this forecast for 2017 varies from the 2017 budget reset due to a number of changes to the LTF's 2017 financial parameters. The largest differences: the inclusion of new mill revenues and associated spending, the inclusion of preliminary Title V funding, the exclusion of center programs, the exclusion of budgeted contingency expenses, and differences in classification of technology and discretionary spending. These differences reflect best available information that increases the predictive accuracy of the LTF forecast and make 2017 consistent with the LTF's future year projections.

Spending driven by the strategic plan is broken out on a separate expense line item in the income statement. For the purposes of the model, such additional spending is assumed to have a three year duration, after which it would either replace other spending in the base spending model or it would be discontinued. The spending is driven by the following:
- 1 Director of Culture at home office– Values Development
- 1 Senior Manager of Marketing at home office – Integrated Schools
- 1 Director of College Success at home office – College Success
- $500 additional spending per staff member on professional development – People Development
- $100 additional spending per student for enrichment – Integrated Schools

The fundraising needed to support this forecast from 2018 through 2026 is as follows:

Annual donations ($200 per student)	$17.6M
Strategic Planning initiatives	$4.0M
Campuses 8-11 Buildout (net Title V)	$3.2M
Home Office buildout	$6.2M
Additions to Network Reserve*	$11.4M
TOTAL FUNDRAISING NEED	$42.4M

*Network Reserve need is driven by a target of ~25% of annual operating expenses.

Opening two new campuses in Aurora would require additional fundraising of $2 million per campus and $2.5 million for additional home office capacity (to cover both one-time startup costs and additional staffing prior to scale).

Appendix

Strategy Work Plans

The implementation and rollout of the plan's strategies will be conducted over the next three years. The most detailed implementation planning to date has focused on identifying the changes required for schools in the next six months, listed in the work plans below as "Year 0" with activities delineated between the home office and schools teams . The priorities and timeframes envisioned after that are more speculative and will be refined and expanded over the next three months, and then updated annually during the strategic plan review process. Note that the strategies listed below are copied from the strategy section of the plan—they are repeated here only to aid in providing context for the work plan.

Core Model Element Plans

Academic Preparedness through STEM		
Strategies	• Clearly define an academic model that supports all core elements • Update STEM programming to be robust and relevant • Ensure academic programming addresses needs of ELL, SPED, and gifted students	
Year 0 **Jan –July 2017**	Home Office 1. Develop and implement new coaching and TE rubric 2. Develop and implement revised grading and assessment procedures 3. STEM guidance – For schools adding new courses or changing courses, ensure alignment to the school's STEM focus.	Schools 1. Provide input 2. Provide input 3. Ensure alignment
Year 1 2017-18	• Document Academic Program Philosophy, Core Program - Grad requirements, Courses, Minutes, etc. • Finalize STEM 6-12 vision • Establish ELL and SpEd success metrics • Pilot test providing additional support for special services	
Year 2 2018-19	• Document Academic Program Philosophy, Core Program - Grad requirements, Courses, Minutes, etc. • Finalize STEM 6-12 vision • Finalize ELL and SpEd vision and staffing model	
Year 3 2019-20	• Enhance and refine curriculum as needed • Additional priorities TBD	

Values Development		
Strategies	• Strengthen values foundation of our staff culture • Center school culture and discipline systems in our values • Create a vision for student values development and identity development	
Year 0	Home Office	Schools

Jan –July 2017	1. Develop staff values culture exemplar 2. Develop student values culture exemplar 3. Update and revisit value definitions to ensure they are inclusive 4. Design student values measurement baseline tool 5. Hire Director of Culture	1. Input on exemplar – choose 1 focus area for staff culture 2. Input on exemplar – choose 2 focuses are for student/school culture 3. Provide volunteers 4. Pilot test values measurement in advisory
Year 1 2017-18	Strengthen Values foundation of our staff culture • Create a committee to re-visit value definitions to update and ensure they are inclusive • Assess and catalog the role values plays in staff culture, people development at DSST • Identify three focuses for the 2017-18 school year • Standardize and strengthen the core value commitment process and surveys across the network Center school culture and discipline systems in our values • Create a grounding document on the role of values in the culture design of our schools. Re-ground our cultures in a values centered approach – create metrics/ties to school report card approach • Ask schools to do an audit of their values culture • Create a school plan to re-center culture and systems on values • Train leaders on leading values-centered school cultures Create a vision for student values development and identity development • Create a working group to develop a student values and identity based development sequence over time • Initiate efforts to create measures of progress	
Year 2 2018-19	Strengthen Values foundation of our staff culture • Implement phase 2 of focuses on deepening values based organizational culture based on initial assessment • Create a more robust on-boarding/training program for new staff on our value • Ensure that new school start-ups reflect a strong values culture in planning phase Center school culture and discipline systems in our values • Identify three areas to standardize and create deep systems to support a values driven school culture • Create strong school culture training for staff on how to lead a values-based approach • Create strategies to increase parent and community engagement in our values approach Create a vision for student values development and identity development • Revise from pilot program and implement values/identity development sequence in all schools • Implement a consistent values measurement framework	

Year 3 2019-20	Strengthen Values foundation of our staff culture • Implement phase 3 of focuses Center school culture and discipline systems in our values • Refine and fine –tune implementation of Phase 1 and phase 2 as needed Create a vision for student values development and identity development • Refine values and identity program – Implement a capstone project that supports our graduates' efforts to codify their own values and sense of self

College Success		
Strategies	• Increase quality and capacity of college placement efforts, focusing on mindset of inform-advocate-support in college application counselling which requires using data to ensure students and families know challenges and opportunities of choices • Centralize accountability in order to improve support and ensure equity across campuses • Create aligned vision and supports for whole school college going culture and restructure single college success team versus individual college placement, summer programs, and internships teams. • Explore alternative pathways and partnerships that might better serve students who are enrolled at local colleges and universities where the graduation rate is less than 65%	
Year 0 Jan –July 2017	Home Office 1. Finalize plan for pursuing new College Success metrics 2. Pilot test providing additional support and leadership for College Success at schools	Schools 1. Develop a 2017-18 plan to make progress towards metrics
Year 1 2017-18	• Provide centralized training and development for leaders of College Success to better incorporate data in college advising • Create school based plans for whole-school ownership of college going culture • Curate robust opportunities for summer programs and internships	
Year 2 2018-19	• Develop deeper partnerships with 1-2 local colleges or universities to ensure DSST graduates are better supported for completion • Expand and deepen partnerships with selective colleges and ideal match schools	
Year 3 2019-20	• Develop viable alternatives to colleges and universities where access is high, but completion is low	

Integrated Schools	
Strategies	Address three different areas: Policy, Perception, and Programming • Improve marketing and recruitment (Perception) • Change evaluation process for new campuses (Policy) • Build stronger school cultures that value inclusion and working through differences (Programming) • Add strategies and resources for schools to tailor programming to diverse communities (Programming)

Year 0 Jan –July 2017	Home Office	Schools
	1. Conduct research on branding, marketing and family preferences 2. Create template for Integration Plan 3. Develop people: onboard coordinator and hire marketing manager	1. Provide volunteers and participate in efforts to think about unique community 2. Identify 1-2 small changes to furthering school integration
Year 1 2017-18	• Execute multi-media output oriented marketing campaigns • Develop processes: acquire and manage student data more effectively and rethink roles and responsibilities of HO vs. Schools • Develop systems: student CRM and direct marketing capabilities • Recommend new campus evaluation process incorporating demographic projections • Support schools in implementation of programming changes	
Year 2 2018-19	• Evaluate overall impact of efforts to date, refining best practices • Use new data, systems and processes to effectively communicate and convert target audiences by school	
Year 3 2019-20	• Continued refinement of processes • Additional priorities TBD	

Organizational Initiative Plans

Network Clarity		
Strategies	• Document core model and implement annual school planning process to identify what programming schools are expected to follow, what standards they need to meet, and how school designs are reviewed and approved • Revenue allocation (net of CMO fees) driven by student need	
Year 0 **Jan –July 2017**	Home Office 1. Articulate school plan process and provide template for school plan 2. Rollout student need based revenue allocation model for 2018 budget 3. Define universe of decision rights to be clarified	Schools 1. Complete school plan template by March 25 2. Complete 2018 school budget
Year 1 **2017-18**	• Strike optimal balance of detail and simplicity in design of document to capture core model programming inventory and decision rights • Refine annual school planning process based on lessons learned • Generate Detailed LTF in Adaptive from 2018 Budget • Use Detailed LTF to drive 2019 budget targets	
Year 2 **2018-19**	• Refine core model documentation and design process for ongoing updates • Explore online school plan system and integration with Polaris report cards • Update Detailed LTF from 2018 actuals and 2019 budget and use to drive 2020 budget targets	
Year 3 **2019-20**	• Update Detailed LTF from 2019 actuals and 220 budget and use to drive 2021 budget targets • Other priorities TBD	

Continuous Improvement		
Strategies	• Refine academic data vision and increase support and development for school leaders • Create data-driven approaches to monitor values development, student attrition, college success, and all home office functions • Increase capacity of data team to oversee surveys, provide more training and enhance dashboards	
Year 0 **Jan –July 2017**	Home Office 1. Refine school report card to incorporate core model elements	Schools 1. Create school goals consistent with revised report card targets
Year 1 **2017-18**	• Expand scope of data team to oversee regular performance management cycle across organization • Transfer school report cards into Polaris • Design and implement home office and network report cards • Develop predictive student enrollment and attrition models	
Year 2 **2018-19**	• Refine school report cards and design process for ongoing updates • Transfer home office and network report cards into Polaris • Develop predictive college success model	
Year 3 **2019-20**	• Refine home office and network report cards and design process for ongoing updates • Other priorities TBD	

People Development		
Strategies	• Build the capacity of current leaders to better coach and manage team members in order to increase fulfillment, job satisfaction and retention rates • Build stronger leadership teams by standardizing the expectations of school based leadership roles in order to focus on the primacy of people development, resulting in greater sustainability for our school leaders • Invest in leadership development programs and strategies to better prepare high potential team members to advance, build our leadership pipeline • Create clearer career pathways for all staff by expanding and centralizing opportunities for professional development aligned to roadmaps for advancement	
Year 0 Jan –July 2017	Home Office 1. Identify and develop 30 high potential leaders in the organization 2. Continue Emerging Leaders, School Leadership Series to groom high potential leaders; launch Teacher Leader program 3. Build School Director capacity to better develop teams 4. Hire Director of People Development, Senior Manager of Leadership Development 5. Recruit diverse candidate pool of high potential leaders	Schools 1. Restructure leadership team roles in 2017-2018 to be more focused on effective people management
Year 1 2017-18	• Refine Leadership Development programs to maximize effectiveness • Double the time for Summer Leadership Institute to focus on effective coaching and management • Create roadmaps for career pathways and expand offerings • Build the capacity of School Directors to create stronger leadership teams through monthly development sessions differentiated by experience/performance	
Year 2 2018-19	• Launch centralized system to integrate performance data and development opportunities • Expand leadership development strategies, programs and trainings • Evaluate all school based leaders on management effectiveness, ability to develop and retain team members	
Year 3 2019-20	• Launch tool that allows each team member to view performance history, individual development plan, progress to career path goals • All school leadership team members are fully managing no more than 10 direct reports	

Equity and Inclusiveness	
Strategies	• Clearly articulate our core beliefs about equity and inclusiveness and ensure that these beliefs are woven throughout the organization in everything that we do • Better prepare and train our team to be culturally responsive and understand the expectations of working in integrated schools • Increase the presence of diverse perspectives on our teams through intentional

		recruitment, hiring and retention practices	
Year 0 Jan –July 2017	Home Office		Schools
	1. Partnership with National Equity Project to refine our core beliefs 2. Hire a leader on Equity and Inclusiveness		1. Representatives from each school participating in Equity Working Group
Year 1 2017-18	• Understand disparities in student data/creation of equity scorecard • Develop student values and identity development curriculum, emphasis on 6-8 grade • Continue to create policies that promote and protect a diverse workforce • Pilot test Affinity Groups • Develop comprehensive Diversity Recruitment Plan • Reduce bias in hiring process • Retain diverse team members at a rate equal to or higher than all staff averages		
Year 2 2018-19	• Develop strategies to address disparities in student data and experience • Develop strategies to address invisible workload • Revise and enhance 6-8 values and identity development curriculum , complete 9-12 grade		
Year 3 2019-20	• Increase parent engagement, particularly with diverse families • Implement standard on-boarding and training on cultural responsiveness in integrated schools		

Standards and Metrics Methodology

As part of the strategic planning process, DSST is adopting a more comprehensive and consistent approach to performance metrics as part of its Continuous Improvement initiative. To better understand how the targets, metrics, and standards referenced in the plan will be used and reported by DSST, it is necessary to explain some of the major goals of this new approach:

- All key network objectives will be tied to a metric to provide a clear and quantifiable definition of success and a means of holding the organization accountable to that success.
- Every metric should have an owner who is responsible for generating/capturing the following:
  - standard (benchmark)
  - target (result desired for this period—by default will equal standard but may vary to reflect circumstances)
  - forecast (prediction of what result will be in period)
  - actual (actual result that was produced in period)
- All student data metrics will be disaggregated by the following sub-groups (when data is available):
  - Income status (FRL and non-FRL)
  - Racial sub-groups that represent >10% students
  - Students with IEPs and those without
  - Students speaking English as first language and those with English as a second language for each language representing >10% of students
- All staff data metrics will be disaggregated by racial sub-groups that represent >5% of staff.

DSST metrics will be aggregated into "report cards" that are published and updated on regular intervals. For school report cards, the intent is to track performance across the entirety of the student population throughout the year. So even if a standard references an outcome at graduation, which applies only to a single grade level at a single point in time, the report card grade will be driven by measurement of annual progress against target for each grade at the school toward that eventual graduation outcome. The grade will also be derived from the measurement of achievement of target by all sub-groups (as opposed to just school average), such that even if overall average performance is above target, a below-target sub-group will lower the grade. To provide network level views of performance, school report card results will be averaged (weighted by student population) into a single network score.

An example of the current school report card format is below:

2016-2017 Campus Report Card					
Category	Sub-Category	Weight	Score	% Total	
Student Achievement (50%)	CMAS Growth Math [Explore]	10%	5.0	84%	
	CMAS Growth Reading [Explore]	10%	7.0		
	ACT/SAT Score	10%	10.0		
	ACT/SAT % College Ready	10%	10.0		
	100% Acceptance	10%	10.0		
School Culture (40%)	Student Enrollment	10%	5.0	65%	
	Student Re-enrollment	10%	7.0		
	Values	10%	7.0		
	Staff Retention	10%	7.0		
Budget (10%)	Budget	10%	9.0	90%	
DSST Stapleton: 2000 Valentia Street Denver, CO 80238					

Section	Sub-section	DSST Standard	EOY School Data	Sub-groups	EOY Sub-group Scores	EOY School Target Grade	EOY DSST Standard Grade	Sugested Sub-Group Target	Sugested Target (June)	Sept 30 Projection	Sept 30 Points	Oct 30 Update?
Student Achievement (50%)	CMAS Growth Math	CMAS Growth of 70 MGP in Math, all subgroups	52	Minority	54	NA (This Year)	5.0	62.0	60.8	52	5.0	Nov 30 T1 Finals
				SPED	28			49.0				
				ELA	44			57.0				
	CMAS Growth ELA	CMAS Growth of 70 in ELA, for all subgroups	67	Minority	71	NA (This Year)	7.3	75.0	70.0	67	7.0	Nov 30 T1 Finals
				SPED	65			70.0				
				ELA	74			75.0				
	SAT/ACT Average Score	Average SAT score 1130 AND 80% students higher than a 1010, for all subgroups	24.2	Minority	22.4	NA (This Year)	9.3	23.0	1160	1210	10.0	N/A
				SPED	23.5			24.0				
				ELA	18.5			20.8				
	SAT/ACT % College Ready CMAS Proficiency	Average SAT score 1130 AND 80% students higher than a 1010, for all subgroups	73.0%	Minority	65%	NA (This Year)	6.8	73%	80%	92%	10.0	N/A
				SPED	75%			80%				
				ELA	50%			65%				
	College Acceptance	100% Seniors accepted to 4 year college or university	100%	NA		NA (This Year)	10.0	NA	100%	100%	10.0	N/A
School Culture (40%)	Student Enrollment	All grades fully enrolled	103.8%	NA		NA (This Year)	10.0	NA	104%		5.0	(Enrollment 2.0)
	Student Re-enrollment	90% of students re-enroll each year, including from 8th to 9th grade	88.9%	Minority	90.1%	NA (This Year)	7.0	93%	90%	88.4%	7.0	(Lengthier forecasting analysis--not by 10/30)
				SPED	86.2%			90%				
				ELA	84.9%			87%				
	Values	School scores 5.75+ on "DSST is a core values driven organization" question	4.76	NA (This Year)		NA (This Year)	5.0	NA (This Year)	5.26	4.88	7.0	N/A
	Staff Retention	Retain 85% of staff	82.4%	NA (This Year)		NA (This Year)	7.0	NA (This Year)	85%	84.5%	7.0	TCP Placement
Finance/Ops/HR (10%)	Budget	FY16 Budget Variance	($15,279)	FY15 Acutal Carryover		NA (This Year)	8.0		100%	$0	9.0	N/A
		FY16 Actual Carryover	$35,666	$11,157						$32,900		