

The 2015 Call for New Quality Schools: Supplement

For New Middle Schools to Open in Fall 2016



May 2015
Portfolio Management, Academic and Innovation Office
Denver Public Schools
1860 Lincoln St, 12th floor
Denver, CO 80203
<http://osri.dpsk12.org/school-development/>



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From the Superintendent and the Board Chair

May 2015

Dear members of the DPS community,

Our standard Call process begins in December, with the release of a document like this one, which articulates priority needs the district sees for new schools or additional seat capacity, in order to reach the fundamental goal of the Denver Plan 2020: **DPS will provide great school choices in every neighborhood, so that 80% of students will attend high-performing schools by 2020.**

The process normally extends through June, when the Board of Education votes on school approvals or denials and typically makes any related facility placement decisions. Approved schools generally open 13 months later. This standard timeline allows approved schools to have a full year to engage in implementation work, which positions schools to serve students well on day one.

As pressing new needs arise, however, we may from time to time issue a supplement to the Cal, like this one. [New data](#) that became available to the District this spring has led to the identification of new priority needs to improve the quality of middle schools serving students in the Southwest. In addition, the Board of Education recently passed a ground-breaking [Facility Allocation Policy](#) (Policy AG), which provides a transparent framework to inform its facility placement decisions.

The policy creates a transparent system to include not just new schools, but also existing schools or those already approved, but not yet open, in facility placement considerations. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that priority needs are met by the best of all available providers. Just as important, the policy instructs the District to ensure that appropriate community engagement occurs to inform placement decisions. The policy provides an impetus for greater community input around the Manual feeder middle school, which was identified as [a priority need in the December Call](#), and for previously approved schools to be considered as candidates for placement to meet that need.

These combined realities present the District with a unique opportunity: We have urgent needs that must be met, and a new policy framework that requires us to act differently. As you will see [in a subsequent section](#) of this document, the District intends to support Board of Education votes on proposal quality and placements in the fall, allowing placed schools access to the fullest implementation year possible.

The Board and Staff thus join together in requesting new school proposals to meet priority needs identified here – as well as placement applications from existing and approved, but not yet open, schools.

Thank you for joining us in pursuit of our goal: Great Schools in Every Neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Tom
Tom Boasberg
Superintendent

Happy
Allegra “Happy” Haynes
Chair, Board of Education

What Is the Call for New Quality Schools?

The Call is:

1. A **public document** that transparently articulates priority needs for new schools or additional capacity in the district.
2. A **quality review process** that invites new school applications to meet these needs, facilitates quality reviews of these applications, engages community and supports Board decision-making on new school approvals.
3. Based on the Board of Education's adoption of [Facility Allocation Policy AG](#) in February 2015, this Call supplement also launches a **facility placement process** to leverage strategic facility use to meet priority needs, invite requests for consideration from existing or previously approved schools, and support Board decision-making on facility placements. Placement decisions contemplate all available options: new school applications designed for specific priority needs that meet the quality bar, as well as existing providers and schools already approved, but not yet open, that complete a separate placement application process. For more information, see [How DPS Selects Providers to Meet Priority Needs](#).

The Call for New Quality Schools:

1. Abides by the Colorado Charter School Act.
2. Follows guidance outlined by the Colorado State Board of Education in their rules concerning charter authorizing and by National Association of Charter School Authorizers' best practice measures.
3. Acts within the frameworks established by the Denver Board of Education in its Charter Authorizing Policy AF and its Facility Allocation Policy AG.

The Call for New Quality Schools is open to both district-run and charter schools:

A **district-run school** is a public school with a governance structure directly connected to DPS. It has DPS employees, and the Principal is hired and supervised by the district. A district-run school may seek flexibilities around its mission, curriculum, staffing terms, school calendar, school day and other fundamental aspects of their school design. Depending on the type of flexibilities that the school requires in order to operate its model, the school may choose to seek Innovation Status through a separate process.

A **charter school** is a public school with a governance structure that is independent of the district. Charter schools are incorporated as non-profit entities in the state of Colorado and are overseen by a governing board established directly by the school. Charter schools are publicly funded and are free and open to the public without discrimination or selective criteria. Charter schools have the same responsibility to equitably serve students as district-run schools have and are held accountable through the same School Performance Framework employed throughout the district.

The Three Equities

All public schools in Denver, whether they are district-run or charter, operate within the *Three Equities*:

1. **Equity of Opportunity** means that the schools have access to equitable per pupil funding, support services from the district, and available facilities.
2. **Equity of Responsibility and Access** means that the schools must offer equitable and open access to all students—regardless of socio-economic status, disability, home language or other status—and share an equal obligation in district-wide responsibilities, such as the cost of district-wide special education services.

This equity takes shape in numerous ways, including:

- I. Access for students with more severe disabilities in high-quality schools. Historically, these students lacked access to charter schools, and, in recent years, DPS has worked collaboratively to open numerous programs for students with more severe needs in some of our best charter schools. Consistent with this equity commitment, all new school developers should anticipate serving students with more severe needs and should anticipate service for 11% of students possessing disabilities across the larger spectrum, as part of their school designs.
 - II. Enrollment practices. DPS offers a common enrollment system, [SchoolChoice](#), helping to ensure families have equitable access to all schools in the city.
3. **Equity of Accountability** means that all schools have the same accountability system under our [School Performance Framework](#) and that standards of performance are applied evenly across all school types.

The *Three Equities* originated within the path-breaking District-Charter Collaboration Compact, signed in 2010, and are now actively governed and operationalized by the [District-Charter Collaborative Council](#).

How DPS Identifies Priority Needs

DPS uses the Call for New Quality Schools to clearly articulate to community and school developers its priority needs to advance the fundamental goal of the Denver Plan 2020:

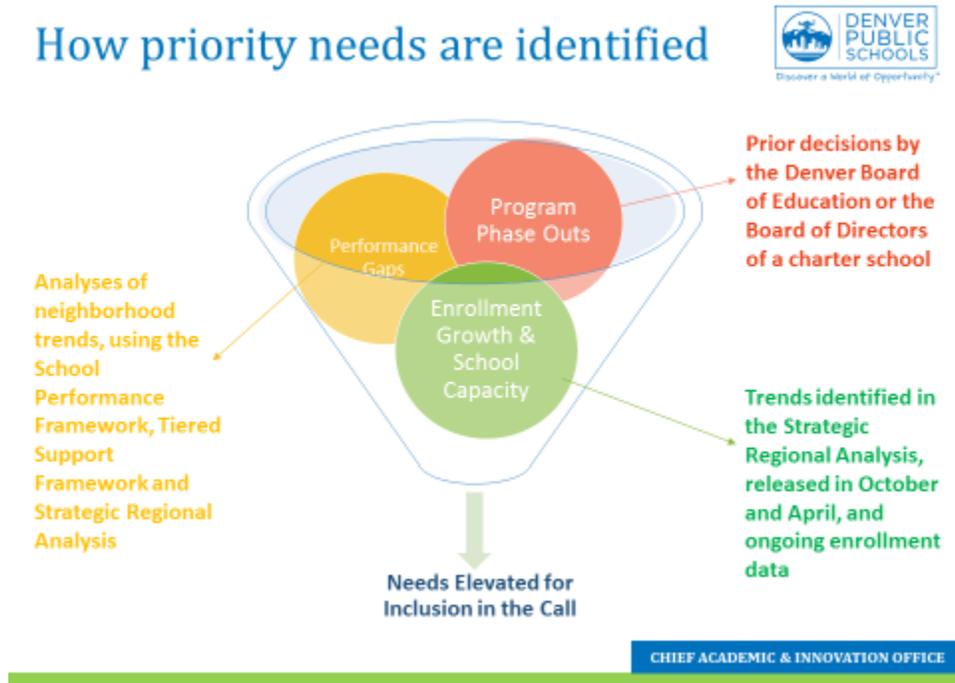
DPS will provide great school choices in every neighborhood, so that 80% of students will attend high-performing schools by 2020.

Priority needs are identified through an analysis of four main data sets:

1. The [School Performance Framework](#) (SPF) – The SPF is the report card issued to all DPS schools, district-run and charter. Using a set of standard criteria, it grades schools on how well they are serving students. SPF information typically is released in the fall.
2. The [Strategic Region Analysis](#) (SRA) – The SRA analyzes enrollment trends in the district, as well as performance on a neighborhood/regional level. Beginning in fall 2016, it also will include information about facility availability and trends within the real estate market. The SRA typically is released in October, although a supplement sometimes is issued in April.
3. The [Tiered Support Framework](#) (TSF) – TSF is the system DPS uses to identify and deliver targeted supports to schools, based on SPF performance, the SRA and other factors. Chief Schools Office oversees TSF for district schools, while Portfolio Management oversees TSF for charter schools. TSF work typically launches after the release of the SPF and SRA.

4. Prior decisions – The DPS Board of Education may vote to phase out or close a district-run school, or to discontinue its contractual relationship with a charter school, as part of the [charter renewal process](#), effectively closing it. As has happened several times in recent years, a charter school board also may vote independently to phase out or close its own school.

DPS considers all of these data sets together to identify priority needs:



About the Consent Decree

Denver Public Schools operates under a Consent Decree ([English](#) | [Español](#)) designed to improve English language learner (ELL) instruction and better serve Denver’s students. Every public school, including charter schools, must provide English Language Acquisition (ELA) services to ELLs. The 2013 Consent Decree establishes minimum standards for charter schools’ ELA programs.

Meeting Consent Decree requirements is an important part of satisfying quality standards for approval:

- All charter applicants must meet the threshold requirements of Chapter 8 of the Consent Decree and undertake necessary reporting.
- All district-run applicants must meet the expectations of the Consent Decree as a whole.

In defining a priority need for a specific school site and in selecting a provider for service at the site, DPS may determine that elements beyond Chapter 8 of the Consent Decree are required to ensure quality service to students at the identified facility. The Call for New Quality Schools document, and/or its supportive application guides and rubrics, will make [additional criteria](#) clear for charter applicants. These

criteria will help DPS select among all available providers to determine which option best meets a priority need, in alignment with DPS’s Facility Allocation Policy.

Southwest Priority Performance Needs: Middle Schools

In 2013-2014, DPS launched targeted efforts to improve access to high-quality schools in the Southwest, where just 52% of students attend a high-quality school as identified on the SPF.

These initial efforts focused on Kepner Middle School, the region’s lowest performing middle school. As a result of those efforts, which were undertaken collaboratively with a dedicated Thought Partner Group from the Kepner community, two high-performing schools will replicate and open at Kepner in fall 2016, [STRIVE Prep](#) and [Grant Beacon](#). An additional new school, [Compass Academy](#), founded by City Year and Johns Hopkins University, and in partnership with the community, also will provide new, quality options at the secondary level. Further, all three schools will deliver programming that includes native language instruction and will do so in learning environments purposefully designed to be culturally responsive.

These new schools offer great promise, and DPS recognizes that more must be done. This is a message we’ve heard consistently from community members, during public comment at DPS Board meetings, at other [community gatherings](#) and through poignant, community-based advocacy [reports](#).

This supplement to the 2015 Call for New Quality Schools seeks to advance continued improvements at the secondary level in the Southwest.

DPS seeks a middle-school replacement provider for Henry World School.

Henry World School	Accredited On Probation	Accredited On Priority Watch	Accredited On Watch	Accredited On Priority Watch	Accredited On Priority Watch
SPF Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
% Points Earned	27.6%	35.7%	45.3%	35.1%	35.7%
Points Earned	42	51	67	52	51
Points Possible	152	143	148	148	143

DPS will phase out Henry World School, the region's second lowest-performing middle school, starting in 2016-17, because the school has not supported students in achieving sufficient academic progress.

This grades 6-8 school should:

1. Serve students in this community and demonstrate a strong capacity for, or a strong track record of, serving students with similar demographics as the current school.
2. Demonstrate a strong capacity for, or strong track record of, addressing the unique needs of a turnaround environment, including building and sustaining community engagement partnerships that are critical to turnaround.
3. Offer a strong program for English Language Learners. [Specific ELA criteria will apply](#) for placement consideration. (See below).
4. Demonstrate a capacity for, or demonstrated track record of, serving English Language Learners at any time of enrollment, as well as attracting and serving an equitable share of ACCESS level 1 to 3.5 students.
5. Continue service to students in Henry's existing Affective Needs or MI center program.
6. Demonstrate the capacity to open in fall 2016.
7. Provide approximately 350-450 seats on a phase-in basis (i.e., offering 6th grade in fall 2016, 6th and 7th in 2017 and all grades by 2018.)
8. Participate immediately in the Southwest shared enrollment zone.

Student Demographics at Henry World School

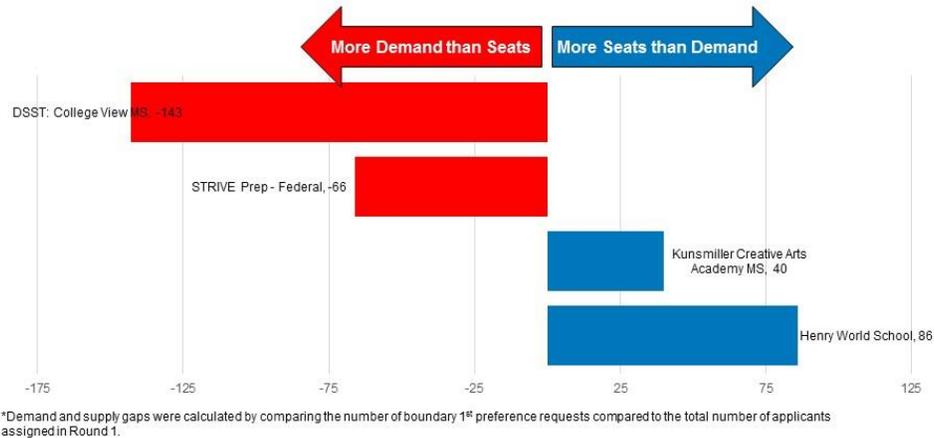
87% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch
44% of students are English Language Learners
*83% of ELLs are Spanish speakers
*5.8% of ELLs are ACCESS 1s or 2s
80% of students are students of color

Note: DPS's Chief Schools Office is sponsoring the development of a district-run new school proposal to address this priority need. The application will undergo the standard quality review process and compete for placement through the facility placement process, assuming it meets quality standards, along with other interested candidates for placement.

DPS seeks a middle-school provider to serve as a high-quality option in the Southwest Middle School Enrollment Zone.

Southwest Middle School Enrollment Zone: Demand v. Supply

How many seats would be available if every 1st preference from the combined West MS and Southwest MS zones were fulfilled?



While most Southwest MS Zone students received their first or second choice, both DSST-CV and STRIVE Prep-Federal are located close to the boundary line of the West MS Zone. As such, these two programs are very popular options with long waitlists for Southwest Denver residents.



1

2015 Choice data demonstrate higher demand for first-choice, high-quality options than are currently available in the area. This new middle school will be considered for possible placement at Lincoln High School in a shared campus and should:

1. Demonstrate a strong capacity for, or a strong track record of, serving students with demographics similar to those in the enrollment zone.
2. Offer a strong program for English Language Learners. [Specific ELA criteria will apply](#) for placement consideration.
3. Demonstrate a capacity for, or demonstrated track record of, serving English Language Learners at any time of enrollment, as well as attracting and serving an equitable share of ACCESS level 1 to 3.5 students.
4. Serve students with more significant disabilities in a center program.
5. Demonstrate the capacity to open in fall 2016.
6. Provide approximately 350-450 seats on a phase-in basis (i.e., offering 6th grade in fall 2016, 6th and 7th in 2017 and all grades by 2018.)
7. Participate immediately in the Southwest shared enrollment zone.

Student Demographics in the Southwest Middle School Enrollment Zone

83% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch
 47% of students are English Language Learners
 *86% of ELLs are Spanish speakers
 *5.8% of ELLs are ACCESS 1s or 2s
 88% of students are students of color

Near Northeast Priority Performance and Capacity Need: Middle School

As articulated in [the December Call](#), the phase out of the middle school at Pioneer Charter School, combined with the reality that Bruce Randolph, the area's boundary 6th – 12th grade school, is at full capacity, leads DPS to project the need for additional middle school seats in the northwest portion of the Near Northeast. Further, DPS seeks to leverage a new area middle school to serve as a feeder for Manual High School, a need that [key community groups](#) have articulated.

At this point, we expect the school's likely placement to be at Manual High School to provide a more seamless transition to the high school for students interested. To allow for greater community input around the middle school's likely placement at Manual High School and to ensure consideration of the best among all available options, DPS is relisting the priority need in this Call supplement.

DPS seeks a middle-school provider to serve as a high-quality option in the Near Northeast and as a feeder for Manual High School.

This grades 6-8 school should:

1. Demonstrate a capacity for, or demonstrated track record of, quality service to students with this neighborhood's demographics.
2. Offer a strong program for English Language Learners. [Specific ELA criteria will apply](#) for placement consideration.
3. Demonstrate a capacity for, or demonstrated track record of, serving English Language Learners at any time of enrollment, as well as attracting and serving an equitable share of ACCESS level 1 to 3.5 students.
4. Serve a center program for students with more significant disabilities.
5. Demonstrate the capacity to open in fall 2016.
6. Offer approximately 350-450 seats. DPS is open to either full offerings in 2016, or a phase-in growth model.
7. Serve a boundary or shared zone in the future.
8. Provide a design that considers a match for service as a dedicated feeder for Manual High School.

Student Demographics in Area Middle Schools

88% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch
47% of students are English Language Learners
*97% of ELLs are Spanish speakers
*5.6% of ELLs are ACCESS 1s or 2s
91% of students are students of color

ELA Requirements for Placement Consideration

To be considered for placement to meet the priority needs identified in this document, school plans must include:

- 1. A program designed to meet the academic and cultural needs of English Language Learners.**

2. **Appropriate staff to serve English language learners**, including a) a team of qualified ELA teachers and an ELA leader to monitor student progress in English Language Acquisition; b) a trained and bilingual counselor/designee for post-secondary readiness; and c) a trained school leader who oversees and evaluates the effectiveness of ELA services provided by the school teachers.
3. **Appropriate parent engagement structures**, including a) a plan to provide parent communications in the parent language indicated at registration; b) a leader or designee who can communicate the services offered in the school to parents in the parent's language; c) a Spanish-speaking office staff member; and d) a clear structure through which families receiving ELA services will help evaluate ELA programming at the school (i.e., Parent Action Committee.)

For the priority needs identified for the replacement provider for Henry World School and for the Near Northeast middle school, plans must also include:

1. A staffing structure and recruitment plan that includes a Spanish-speaking teacher (i.e., ELA-S) who will provide additional supports for students whose English Language proficiency is intermediate level or below, as well as Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals to provide native language supports.

For the priority need identified for a new middle school in the Southwest Middle School Enrollment Zone, plans must also include:

1. A staffing structure and recruitment plan that provides classroom supports in Spanish, as well as classroom instruction in Spanish, in core content areas at each grade, for students whose English Language proficiency is intermediate level or below.

How DPS Selects Providers to Meet Priority Needs

When a priority need is identified through the Call, DPS considers new school applications, as well as existing or already approved schools that request to be considered. The goal is for a priority need to be met by the best of all available options.

Teams proposing new schools who want to be considered for placement to meet a priority need must complete a new school application. New school applications must meet the quality review standards that apply to all new schools in DPS, in order to be considered for placement. An Application Review Team will evaluate applications and form an opinion on quality to share with the Superintendent. The Superintendent will make a recommendation to the Board of Education about whether a new school proposal should be approved or denied on a quality basis. For charter applicants, the District Accountability Committee will make an independent recommendation on quality to the Board.

Existing schools, or those already approved, but not yet open, must complete a facility placement application materials. (New school applicants do not need to complete the facility placement materials.)

A **Placement Review Team** will evaluate appropriate sections from new school applications and facility placement application materials to form an opinion to share with the Superintendent about applicants' alignment to the Board's Facility Allocation Policy and any site-specific criteria identified in the Call.

In most cases, DPS will convene a **Thought Partner Group** from the community impacted by a priority need. The Thought Partner Group also will engage with applicants and form an opinion about applicants' fit for placement.

The Denver Board of Education ultimately decides which new schools should be allowed to open and which applicant is the best among all available options for a priority need, and thus should be placed to meet that need. The Board's decision is informed by recommendations from the Superintendent, the Thought Partner Group and other community input.

Questions? See our [FAQs](#).

Timeline for This Call Cycle

DPS Responsibilities

Applicant Responsibilities

Shared Responsibilities

Month	Activities
April	<p>Release Call Supplement</p> <p>Continued engagement with impacted communities; begin formation of Thought Partner Groups</p>
May	<p>18th: Release updated new school application materials and facility placement applications for existing and approved schools. Materials will include rubrics specific to ELA program expectations.</p>
June	<p>1st: Letters of intent due from new school applicants and from existing and approved schools seeking placement consideration</p>
July	<p>22nd: Applications due</p> <p>Application Review Team Meeting 1</p> <p>Placement Review Team Meeting 1</p>
August	<p>Thought Partner Group & Community Meetings (dates TBD)</p> <p>New school applicant interviews with Application Review Team and, for charters, District Accountability Committee (dates TBD)</p> <p>Application Review Team Meeting 2</p> <p>Placement Review Team Meeting 2</p>
September	<p>3rd (tentative): New school and placement applicant presentations to Board of Education (BOE)</p> <p>8th (tentative): Staff, District Accountability Committee and Thought Partner Group recommendations to BOE</p>

	<p>15th (tentative): Public comment to BOE</p> <p>17th (tentative): BOE vote on new school approvals denials</p>
September - November	BOE votes on placements (TBD)

FAQs

What are DPS’s “quality standards” for new schools?

DPS embraces the School Quality Framework, which identifies key elements in leadership, teaching, culture, education program and governance. For new schools, it is embodied through the publicly available rubrics used to evaluate the quality of new school proposals. Updated versions of the rubrics and application guides will be available on May 18.

What is an “Application Review Team” (ART)?

An ART is a group of experts from in and outside of the District who evaluate new school proposals, using the rubrics. The team includes experts in ELA, SPED, finance, curriculum, instruction, human resources and other areas; a parent/guardian from the intended region also serves on an ART. ARTs develop a confidential and deliberative opinion to share with the Superintendent, to help inform his/her recommendation to the Board of Education about whether a new school proposal meets quality standards and should be allowed to open.

What are the “facility placement application” materials?

These materials will be released on May 18. Schools can anticipate a standard placement application, which will be based on the Facility Allocation Policy’s criteria and the site-specific criteria identified in this Call. Schools that were approved for a different region or no region, or that would be serving a substantively different student population, also will be asked to complete a program supplement.

Does a new school need to complete the facility placement application?

No. A new school application will address all needed areas. Only existing schools or those already approved, but not yet open, need to complete the facility placement materials.

What is the “Placement Review Team”?

The Placement Review Team evaluates facility placement applications, as well as relevant sections of new school applications, against the criteria established by the Facility Allocation Policy and site-specific criteria. This team includes representatives from key DPS departments, including Planning & Analysis, Operations Support Services, Portfolio Management, Chief Schools Office, Family and Community Engagement, Finance and the Chief of Staff’s Office. It forms an opinion to share with the Superintendent, to help inform his/her recommendation to the Board of Education about the strength of candidates seeking placement.

What is a Thought Partner Group (TPG)?

A Thought Partner Group is a team of community members in an area where a priority need has been identified. Supported by DPS's [Family and Community Engagement](#) (FACE) office, a TPG typically develops a set of qualities they'd like to see in a chosen provider's approach to leadership, teaching, culture, education program and governance. TPGs then evaluate candidates against those qualities. New school and placement applicants will be invited to attend key community meetings and are encouraged to study developing information from TPG and other community meetings on FACE's [website](#).

Since DPS is convening Thought Partner Groups, do we still need to undertake our own community engagement?

Yes. Both new school and facility placement criteria require applicants to demonstrate community involvement and demand for their program.

Who decides?

The Board of Education ultimately decides a) whether a new school application should be approved or denied, and b) which candidate for placement best meets the priority need. In making its decisions, the Board considers the Superintendent's recommendation, the Thought Partner Group's recommendation and other community input. (In the case of new charter school applications, the District Accountability Committee also provides a recommendation on a proposal's quality directly to the Board.)

Can a school be approved to open and not get placed?

Yes. A new school proposal can meet the quality standards, but not be selected as the provider for a priority need. Again, the Board of Education will select the best provider among all of the available options to meet a priority need.

You didn't answer my question. Who should I contact?

Jennifer Holladay, Director of School Development, at Jennifer_holladay@dpsk12.org

Appendix A: Letter of Intent for New School Applicants

This letter of intent (LOI) will provide formal notice to Denver Public Schools regarding an applicant's intention to submit a new school proposal to meet a priority need identified in the 2015 Call supplement. Please email this LOI to Jennifer_Holladay@dpsk12.org by 5 p.m. on June 1, 2015.

The information presented in the LOI is non-binding.

Proposed School Name:	
Grade Configuration:	
Model or Focus:	
Charter or District-Run:	
Primary Contact Person:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Priority Need:	
Proposed Leader (if known):	
Replication:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Contract with ESP/EMO:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Enrollment Projections: Provide additional rows and columns if necessary.

GRADE	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
X					
X					
X					
Total # students					
	FRL %		SPED %		ELL %
Proposed Demographics					
Mission of School:					
Provide a brief overview of the education program of the proposed school:					

Appendix B: Letter of Intent for Facility Placement Applicants

This letter of intent (LOI) will provide formal notice to Denver Public Schools regarding a school's request for placement consideration to meet a priority need identified in the 2015 Call supplement. Please email this LOI to Jennifer_Holladay@dpsk12.org by 5 p.m. on June 1, 2015.

The information presented in the LOI is non-binding.

School Name:	
Approved Grade Configuration:	
Model or Focus:	
Date of Board of Education Approval:	
Primary Contact Person:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Priority Need:	
Region/Neighborhood of Original Approval:	
Proposed Leader (if known):	

Enrollment Projections, as Approved, or Actual Enrollment for an Existing School: *Provide additional rows and columns if necessary.*

GRADES	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
X					
X					
X					
Total # students					
	FRL %		SPED %		ELL %
Demographics, as Approved or as Existing					