



# DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS • BOARD OF EDUCATION

School District No. 1 in the City and County of Denver and State of Colorado  
900 Grant Street • Denver, Colorado 80203 • Telephone 720-423-3210 • Fax 720-423-3216

January 22, 2013

Dear Members of Denver City Council:

I write to you today as a member of the Denver Public Schools (DPS) Board of Education with an overview of the need for a new elementary school in the far southeast region of our city.

As the DPS Board of Education's southeast representative, 22 year resident of Council District 4 and a DPS parent for 16 years, I can speak directly to what I see in terms of demographic changes in this area of Denver.

Demographic changes and population growth of school age children are not new to the Southeast region. In the mid 1990's the Southern Hills neighborhood near Wellshire Golf Course experienced tremendous growth in elementary age kids. DPS re-opened Slavens School to provide classroom space. Today Slavens is at full capacity and ready to begin phase two of a building expansion to accommodate needed classroom space, funded with the recent passage of the 2012 DPS Bond.

The Hampden Heights area is seeing the same type of growth. I can assure you that there is a need for a new ECE/K-5 school in this area. While enrollment can tend to vary slightly year to year, the trend that I have seen has been a consistent growth of elementary age students in this part of Denver. You have likely heard the reports of the short term fixes we have employed - modular units, transporting students to middle schools for certain classes, utilizing library space, or a stage for short term classroom space. These options have helped the elementary schools of Samuels, Holm and Southmoor address their short term needs, but it is only a band aid approach, and quite frankly, DPS students deserve better quality learning environments.

Since early fall 2012, I have walked the area of the Hampden Heights to share information about the proposed project. As you know, this project was one of several of the 2012 Bond proposed projects. What I heard from parents was concern about the options and timing, how it would impact present school boundaries – in the short term. The reality is that this school will primarily benefit and impact many 'future users' – families in this area with young children who are infants and toddlers today. These families may not have students in DPS at present. The construction of this new school would not start until 2014-2015.

I know that this project has raised concerns about the use of this land and loss of open space, but I truly believe this campus could provide more opportunity to not only serve the needs of a growing population of preschool and elementary school students in a sustainable fashion, but can also provide the community with an asset that benefits all residents. DPS will engage with the community to thoughtfully develop a school design to take advantage of location adjacent to a natural area. There is an opportunity to integrate environmental education and engage the neighboring community members.

I appreciate your consideration of the genuine needs for current and future students in this area of Denver; and the fact that this is the best location to serve this population in Southeast Denver.

If there is any additional information I can provide as a DPS Board member representing this district, please let me know.

Anne Rowe  
DPS Board of Education Member