**List of Objections to DSST**

1. Neighborhood schools are the backbone of our public education system; DSST siphons talented kids away from DPS neighborhood schools, weakening them and thus DPS.
2. As a Charter School, DSST takes critical resources away from DPS and its traditional public schools.
3. DSST does not have to deal with special needs kids; its program is not a solution for the typical traditional public school.
4. DSST through charitable contributions provides computers to all of its students, and this technology contributes significantly to its record of success.  It is not economic or practical to provide computers to all of DPS’ students and thus the success of DSST will not scale.
5. The DSST model can never break even just with the Per Pupil Operating Revenue provided by the State of Colorado (and the other relatively modest revenue sources provided by local and Federal governments).  It is dependent on substantial charitable donations and is unsustainable without them.
6. DSST has an advantage in hiring talented teachers.  For every opening there are multiple qualified applicants.  This model cannot scale locally, in the state or nationally as ordinary teachers cannot successfully deliver the program.
7. While DSST accepts students by lottery, it is pretty much the gifted and talented kids that apply, a self-selection process.  By siphoning off talented kids, DSST weakens traditional DPS public schools, and gets credit it does not deserve for the results turned in by those talented kids; they might do just as well at a traditional public school.
8. Teachers at DSST do not have the proper protection provided by the Teachers Union; most are young, naive, overworked and underpaid.  This too is not sustainable.
9. Not all kids need to go to college; DSST’s college ready approach is not appropriate for a large number of students many of whom would rebel at or not be able to meet this requirement.
10. Many kids are not interested in STEM; DSST’s STEM approach is not appropriate for a large number of students many of whom would rebel at or not be able to meet this requirement.
11. Some feel that it makes no sense to try to even apply to DSST because they only have 1 or 2 slots available for kids from Graland or other private schools transitioning into high school.
12. Some feel that DSST has had to give up creativity and flexibility in its curriculum in order to ensure that everyone makes his/her way through the curriculum and becomes eligible for college.
13. There is discomfort with the perception that the arts are not an important component of the program:  music, art, theatre, etc.
14. **Teresa’s Response to Objections 1 and 2**

**Issue:**

Neighborhood schools are the backbone of our public education system; DSST siphons talented kids away from DPS neighborhood schools, weakening them and thus DPS.

**Arguments:**

• DSST takes the best kids and leaves those who are special Ed, discipline problems and low achievers to the neighborhood schools to contend.

• DSST discourages students from applying who are not already high achievers

• DSST moves kids out of their schools who are "problem kids" and dumps them on the system

• DSST is not for every child and thereby takes money out of the system for special interest families

**Response:**

• Pursuit of excellence for all students is the goal of DSST. DSST is Denver Public School and not a separate entity outside of DPS.

• DPS enrolls students in schools through a lottery with preference for students in the surrounding neighborhood and students eligible for free or reduced lunch.

• All students have DSST as an option, there is no screening or selection process. Data shows that students coming into DSST middle school are not any different than students going to any other DPS middle school

* DSST schools are fully enrolled and have a waiting list, which is a reflection of success and the achievement of our students.

• Approximately 60% is DSST students are free and reduced lunch eligible.

• Retention data for DSST shows that DSST does not "push out" students. DSST shows extraordinary success for enrolled students. Since DSST is part of DPS, the process for expelling a students is the same all other DPS.

**Issue:**

As a Charter School, DSST takes critical resources away from DPS and its traditional public schools.

**Arguments:**

• DSST gets the same resources as the neighborhood schools, but not the problems

• DSST gets all the new buildings and leaves the rest of the schools with inadequate facilities

• DSST uses back channels to unfairly take more than its share of capital funds

• DSST dilutes the funding that would otherwise go to my existing school

• DSST does not offer arts, sports, music, and other programs that cost money

**Response:**

• The deficit of adequate funding for public education is a State issue and DSST does not reduce the funding received by any non-DSST school.

• DSST actually has received less funding per student than other DPS. DSST historically has not received new mill levy funds that benefited all other DPS.

• By raising funds, DSST has relieved the DPS budget from costs it would have otherwise had to cover.

• DSST does not receive any of the substantial funds raised by the DPS Foundation, which means that there are more funds available to DPS students not enrolled at DSST.

• DSST paid for the high school on the Stapleton campus, which saved DPS from having to build a school. DSST is giving that school to DPS.

• DPS funds facilities through a public process and DSST participates in that process in the same manner as all other schools.

* DSST teachers are not eligible for “Pro Comp” awards despite their records of teaching success.

1. **Sean, Teresa, Deborah, Bill, and Steve’s Responses to Objection 3**

**Issue:**

DSST does not have to deal with special needs kids; its program is not a solution for the typical traditional public school.

**Responses: .**

* We are a public school, we have SPED kids, and we are embracing the opportunity to serve them.
* By law, we cannot select based on GT, IAP, we can't choose to "not deal" with certain students. Our program is unique but not exclusionary.
* We have no ability to screen kids in the lottery.
* Now Charter Schools are allowed to run SPED programs, so our program will allow us to serve a full spectrum of kids already identified as SPED beginning in middle school, which is rare in any city or country.
* DPS charged us for SPED services
* Computers in some autism programs make a huge difference

1. **Dan’s Response to Objection 7**

**Issue:**

While DSST accepts students by lottery, it is pretty much the gifted and talented kids that apply, a self-selection process.  By siphoning off talented kids, DSST weakens traditional DPS public schools, and gets credit it does not deserve for the results turned in by those talented kids; they might do just as well at a traditional public school.

**Argument:**

* DSST selects high achieving students (or high achieving students self-select) and that explains DSST’s successes in the classroom.

**Response:**

* From its founding, DSST's goal has been to provide a high quality education to all students in DPS, regardless of race, gender or socio-economic background.  In fact, DSST added middle schools to its campuses because some incoming 9th grade students were performing so far below grade level that it was very difficult to have them college ready in four years of high school.
* DSST has always been an open-enrollment school, unlike the DPS magnet schools, such as DSA.  DSST does not require entrance examinations and is open to all students willing to work hard in a core values culture.
* In its early years, because students and/or parents needed to apply to DSST, there may have been some self-selection bias among those families seeking a rigorous academic program. However, DPS's choice enrollment plan, has eliminated any self-selection bias because listing DSST as a first choice school takes no more effort than listing another neighborhood school in DPS.

**e. Teresa and David’s Responses to Objection 5**

**\*Please note, the responses below are from notes Katie Glenn took at the November Board Meeting.**

**Issue:**

The DSST model can never break even just with the Per Pupil Operating Revenue provided by the State of Colorado (and the other relatively modest revenue sources provided by local and Federal governments).  It is dependent on substantial charitable donations and is unsustainable without them.

**Argument:**

Is DSST sustainable or not sustainable?

**Response:**

* Yes, DSST is sustainable.
  + We raise money in order to open schools the way we think all (students, staff, the DSST organization) can succeed.
    - DPS has adopted our model of opening schools one grade at a time.
  + Our outcomes speak volumes and our students graduate at the same costs as DPS.
* No, DSST is not sustainable.
  + It costs a lot of money to run a network of schools and open new ones.
  + We use a lot of technology which also costs a lot of money.
  + DSST has to raise money to stay in business.
  + Fundraising efforts have to continue to grow as we expand.

**Keywords and Thoughts:**

* Most companies and organizations have start-up losses.
* The key to sustainability is to continue to get money.
* Humbleness should be used in every answer.