

# DSST

What Makes DSST Special  
*Preparing students for college,  
careers and life.*





## DSST WAS FOUNDED IN 2004.

DSST was founded in 2004 with a dream that one public charter high school could redefine the American high school experience. The school's mission then was the same as it is today: **to provide every student with an outstanding and rigorous STEM education that serves as strong preparation for college and life.**

From our first day, we have been striving to ensure that every student and staff member is affirmed for their **unique gifts and talents**, and has the opportunity to **meaningfully and positively contribute** to our **collective human story**. It's what we refer to as **the human condition**, and it continues to be core to the work that we do.

I was DSST's founding School Director, and since opening our first public school with a 9th grade class of 130 students, DSST's impact has grown to serving over 6,200 students in Aurora and Denver at 15 middle schools and 6 high schools, across 9 campuses. Our team works to provide all of our students with a world class education - an education that empowers our students to graduate with a **strong sense of values**, a **deep understanding** of their **identity**, and **academic skills** that ensure they are college and career ready. As our network grows and we watch our alumni flourish, we continue to be dedicated to working with our students and families as we build schools that bring opportunity in the communities we serve for many generations to come.

**Bill Kurtz**  
CEO of DSST Public Schools

# MISSION

DSST PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSFORMS URBAN PUBLIC EDUCATION BY ELIMINATING EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY AND PREPARING ALL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND THE 21ST CENTURY.

## WHAT MAKES DSST SPECIAL?

DSST's core school model focuses on a few key elements that make us unique:



**Integrated schools:** Our goal is to bring students from a multitude of backgrounds to learn alongside and from one another. We do this by running world-class schools that are incredibly effective at serving all students and by recruiting students from a variety of backgrounds to each of our schools. We aim for our schools to have a mix of students where our Free and Reduced Lunch population makes up no less than 40% and no more than 70% of our student body. While this isn't true of all of our schools currently, this is the bar we aspire to continuously.



**Values:** DSST is built on 6 Core Values: Respect, Responsibility, Courage, Curiosity, Doing Your Best and Integrity. They have helped to guide our staff and student culture through conversations, morning meetings and celebrations. These values act as our network's north star as we continually improve as in our ability to contribute to the human story.



**Academic Preparation with STEM:** DSST runs schools with a liberal arts curriculum with an additional focus on STEM. Our goal is to prepare our students in every way for college and beyond - to be strong leaders and clear communicators who are well-versed in every academic area. DSST's curriculum prepares students for internships and independent projects and to have a broad understanding of the world around them. This preparation manifests in some of the highest SAT scores and AP pass rates in Colorado.



**College Success:** Our curriculum, systems and culture are all geared towards ensuring our students are both admitted into college and are successfully set up for a multitude of career and life opportunities. Even in our middle schools, you will see our walls adorned in college symbols, and college is deeply embedded in the lexicon.

Integrated Schools

+

Values

+

Academic Preparation  
(curriculum/  
gradual release)

=

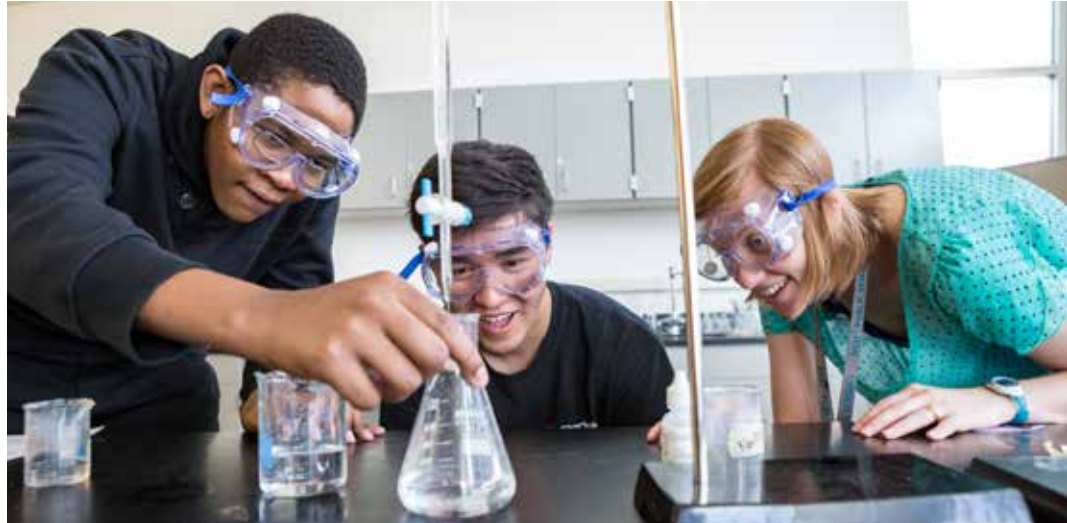
College Success



## OUR GRADUATES ATTEND...

Air Force Academy  
Colorado College  
Colorado Mesa University  
Colorado School of Mines  
Colorado State University  
Cornell College  
Harvard University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Metropolitan State University of Denver  
Morehouse College  
New York University  
Pomona College  
Princeton University  
Regis University  
Spelman University  
Stanford University  
Tuskegee University  
University of Colorado  
University of Denver  
University of Nevada  
University of North Carolina  
University of Northern Colorado  
University of Utah  
University of Wyoming  
Yale University  
**And many more!**

## OUR STUDENTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES



### BEST MIDDLE SCHOOLS & HIGH SCHOOLS IN DENVER

DSST OPERATES 6 OF THE TOP 10 HIGH SCHOOLS IN DENVER  
DSST OPERATES 6 OF THE TOP 10 MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN DENVER

100%

college admittance  
for over a decade

### OUR RESULTS:

- Winner of the 2018 Broad Prize for Best Charter School Network in the Country
- 2 National Blue Ribbon Schools - DSST: GVR HS and DSST: Byers MS
- In 2019:
  - All 6 DSST high schools are in the top 10 high schools in Denver for math growth
  - DSST Middle School @ Noel is the #1 middle school for ELA/Math growth
  - DSST has 2 of the top 3 high schools in Colorado for P/SAT math growth



## WHAT IS DSST?

DSST is a non-profit public charter school network. Like all non-profits we have a mission and our bottom line is ensuring our students are prepared for college and life. This means Denver Public Schools and Aurora Public Schools authorize us to have schools in certain neighborhoods, serving their students and families. The application and agreement between our non-profit and the school district is called a “charter” – which is where the term “charter schools” come from. All of our schools are completely public and tuition-free, but we can use our own curriculum and staff, who are not district employees, to work in our schools. This allows us to avoid bureaucracy, be more innovative and continually refine our approach.



DSST is  
tuition-free  
public,  
and open  
to all students

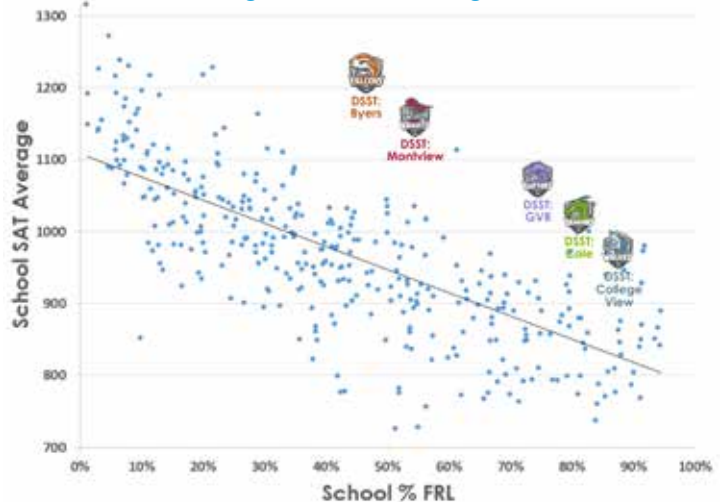
## COLLEGE READINESS

DSST’s High School students outperform other Colorado students with similar racial and socio-economic backgrounds” - then list:

- DSST has 3 of the top 5 Colorado schools for SAT scores for FRL Students
- DSST’s African American SAT score average of 1051 outpaces Colorado’s average of 899

**DSST HIGH SCHOOLS STAND OUT AMONGST COLORADO HIGH SCHOOLS FOR SAT AVERAGE SCORES VS. THEIR STUDENT BODY’S FRL AVERAGE**

Colorado high schools: SAT Avg. vs. Percent FRL



## OUR STORIES...

DSST was founded to create a place where all community members, staff and students alike, are valued for their unique gifts and contribution to the human story. DSST is filled with incredible people with incredible stories - here are just a few.



### **Kamaria Hakeem**

DSST: Montview class of '08  
Howard University class of '12  
Project Engineer ,  
McDermott Inc.



### **Courtney Peña**

Parent of a DSST:  
Cole student

“My DSST teachers changed my life. They saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. When I think about where my life has gone and how people who grew up in my same community are in such different places, despite similar family and economic structures, I know that difference is because of my teachers. I want to pay that forward.”



### **Dr. Brandi Chin**

DSST Middle School @ Noel  
School Director

“Our shared commitment to end educational inequity starts with our entire team uniting in the belief that 100% of students are capable of achieving at the highest levels. I joined DSST because of our deep commitment to develop our people to be the incredible teammates and leaders our students need and deserve- and this all hinges on our focus on our core values. We don't focus on values for values sake but they truly are embedded in the fabric of our culture - which is why DSST will always have a special place in my heart. “

“DSST Cole has been the perfect choice for our children. They have thrived in an environment where they are personally known, challenged, and encouraged to grow to their potential. The emphasis on character development and academic excellence is helping them to mature into well-rounded individuals. In addition, they are surrounded by incredible staff and teachers who are challenging them in the classrooms, on the fields, in the hallways, and in life. I believe that DSST's strength lies in its smaller school environment where all students are known and pushed towards growth. There is an underlying belief that every student can and will succeed! It is this belief that drives the mission forward, opening doors to bright futures for each and every student.”

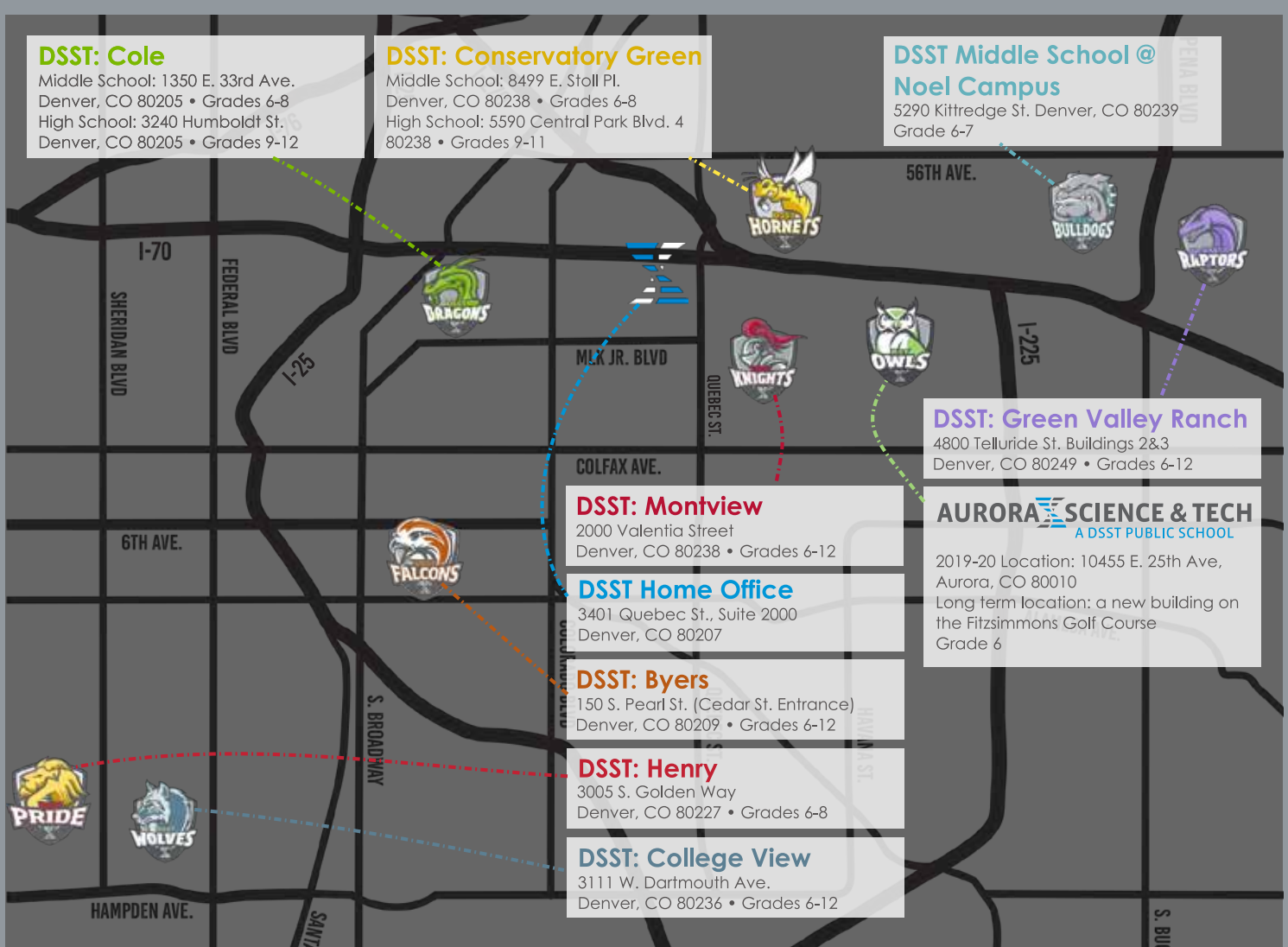


### **Tracey Neubrand**

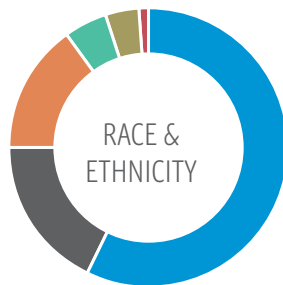
DSST: Montview Middle School  
Science Teacher

“When I explored moving to Denver I wanted to find a values driven organization with a mission that matched my own. Thankfully I found DSST. The reason I continue to work at DSST is that we are an organization that works to make decisions that align with our values, and as long as that continues, I will continue to work at DSST.”

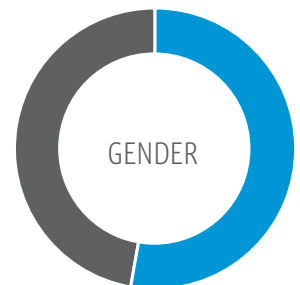
# OUR SCHOOLS



**71%**  
RECEIVE FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH



**58%** HISPANIC OR LATINX  
**18%** BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN  
**15%** CAUCASIAN  
**5%** ASIAN  
**4%** TWO OR MORE RACES  
**1%** NATIVE AMERICAN



**53%** MALE  
**47%** FEMALE

# DSST

Join us and advance  
our mission to end  
educational inequity.



**DSST**  **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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