



## District Improvement. *Catalyzing Change.*

### What is a catalyst?

In science, a catalyst is a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction. At DPS, we think of a catalyst as something that accelerates progress towards our goal of ensuring every student succeeds. While we have made progress toward serving all students, we must continue to push ourselves to ensure that our students graduate with the skills they need to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are all catalysts – and district improvement activities are key to increasing our collective ability to reach our goals.

### Our Students. *Catalyzing Change.*

We're preparing our students to catalyze change in their own lives as well as in our community, our city, our country and our world. We can each catalyze change through our individual work, as teams, and as a district. In a perfect world, every student graduates on time, ready for college and career, however we know that many of our students face significant barriers in completing their education. For this reason, we must work tirelessly together to support all of our students, regardless of background, ethnicity or neighborhood. We must also continuously assess the impact of our hard work on our students' behalf so that we can ensure our effectiveness and forward movement.

### Our Results. *Catalyzing Change.*

Performance dialogues – ongoing conversations about how we are achieving our ambitious Denver Plan 2020 goals – are central to our success. Just as we encourage teachers to monitor their students' progress, we must have ongoing, structured conversations about our progress as central office. Action teams engage in ongoing dialogues on performance as they continually discuss “how can we do this better.” Each action teams' performance dialogue is highlighted in larger conversations at least once during the year through a sequence of three coordinated meetings that help us understand how we're doing as a district. These meetings provide opportunities for:

- *Explore*: senior leaders are able to reexamine district strategy from a bird's eye perspective
- *Engage*: district leaders are equipped to take action in driving each priority
- *Empower*: the Board of Education to review our progress and provide support as needed

If we don't ask ourselves: “how can we get better,” we deny ourselves the opportunity to improve.

### Our Action. *Catalyzing Change.*

When we're all focused, on-track and moving in the same direction, we can accelerate our progress in order to better serve students. **Action teams**, composed of leaders from across the district, work together to coordinate activity related to a district priority so that we're all pulling in the same direction.

Action teams are responsible for:

- Engaging in discussions around areas of improvement (*Where can we get better?*)
- Presenting key data and status updates and answering questions (*What do leaders need to know to drive the work?*)
- Making clear requests for support by senior leaders (*How can leaders help us support students?*)

### Our Priorities. *Catalyzing Change.*

Priorities help us make decisions about where to best allocate our time and resources. The Denver Plan 2020 and the DPS Academic Strategic Plan identify six district priorities that focus all the efforts of Team DPS to support every child's success:

- Provide a foundation for success
- Support the whole child
- Close the opportunity gap
- Ensure every student is ready for college and career

- Support great teachers and leaders
- Develop great schools in every neighborhood

### **Our Team. *Catalyzing Change.***

We are all Team DPS, and we are all responsible for catalyzing change. If you have questions about performance dialogues or progress monitoring, please contact:

- » Rob Jakubowski | [robert\\_jakubowski@dpsk12.org](mailto:robert_jakubowski@dpsk12.org)
- » Amy McGuire | [amy\\_mcguire@dpsk12.org](mailto:amy_mcguire@dpsk12.org)
- » Michael Culbertson | [michael\\_culbertson@dpsk12.org](mailto:michael_culbertson@dpsk12.org)