SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1
IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER,
STATE OF COLORADO
RESOLUTION NO. ____________

WHEREAS, Denver Public Schools’ (DPS) mission is to provide all students the opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our diverse society; and

WHEREAS, DPS honors diversity and shares a core value of equity. The District is committed to providing the necessary resources and supports to eliminate barriers to success and foster a more equitable future for all students; and

WHEREAS, in school districts across the country, individuals with disabilities have historically been marginalized and underserved, instead of valued as a vital part of the community; and

WHEREAS, we recognize, embrace, and deeply value the 20 percent of the DPS student population who are students with disabilities and who are eligible for services or accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as vital to our communities; and

WHEREAS, despite this belief that students with disabilities are a vital part of our communities, we acknowledge that our students with disabilities in DPS experience significant gaps in academic achievement as compared to their non-disabled peers and these gaps are even more deeply experienced by our students of color with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, scientific peer reviewed studies confirm that both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers have higher academic achievement and improved social-emotional skills through inclusive education; and

WHEREAS, persuaded by this evidence, we believe in inclusive practices that allow students with disabilities to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled, unless the nature or severity of the disability cannot be addressed even with supplementary aids and services; and

WHEREAS, inclusive practices are defined as a set of guiding principles, procedures and strategies implemented by ALL school personnel to ensure all students have appropriately differentiated access to academic instruction and social-emotional learning across all school activities; and
WHEREAS, the Board of Education recognizes and respects the work of a Special Education Task Force, which met during the 2018-19 school year, to define a set of recommendations that directs Denver Public Schools to better serve students with disabilities. A Task Force priority was to address academic and social-emotional disparities for students with disabilities. Their recommendations explicitly focus on creating greater equity for students with disabilities, ensuring inclusive practices, and targeting strategies that help develop the skills of ALL school and district staff in working with students with disabilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education commits Denver Public Schools to becoming a model district in the nation recognized for demonstrating inclusive practices in serving students with disabilities and the Board recommends future policy adoption to affirm this commitment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DPS commits to an ongoing campaign demonstrating the benefits of including students with disabilities in all school activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent and the Division of Student Equity and Opportunity will implement a Strategic Plan to substantially increase inclusive practices across the district. The adopted Strategic Plan will be designed to improve academic and social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities, eliminate racial disparities, and develop the skills of ALL school-based and district staff. This Strategic Plan will launch in August 2019 and will remain a living, breathing document that includes milestones, outcomes, and alignment with other equity-based initiatives.

Anne Rowe, President    Dr. Carrie Olson, Secretary