

new outcomes
for a
new day



Education in Transition A Plan for Change

Across the country, schools and school districts are in transition. The reasons for this vary, with the exception of one cardinal issue: all of our school districts are outdated, as Dr. Tony Wagner explains in his book, *The Global Achievement Gap*. The American education system was invented over 100 years ago with the goal of producing a few college-bound students and many more compliant “routine” workers to meet the needs of the booming Industrial Revolution. Still evident in our school structure today, schools were modeled after the then-admired assembly line model. Information was somewhat limited, and education held a monopoly on that knowledge – students had to come to school to learn/memorize information, as well as learn to read, write and “figure” or do arithmetic.

Today, many of these original components remain in place, yet the outcomes we need from our American educational system

are far different, and the context in which it operates has dramatically changed. Today is a new day for learning.

Douglas County School District (DCSD) is aware of and responding to the challenges in American education. As a district with strong traditions of innovation, excellence and economic efficiency, we are the ideal organization to design and implement a new system that responds to the convergence of recommendations for change in education. DCSD, in the spirit of servant leadership, has collaboratively defined its commitments to students, employees, parents, and our community. Next, we have identified three District-level priorities – Choice, World-Class Education and System Performance. These will keep us true to our Commitments, align our work, and facilitate the transition from an excellent 20th century school district to a world-class 21st century school district.



new outcomes



creative

financially literate

critical thinkers

globally aware

problem solvers

adaptable

ethical

resilient

collaborators

communicators

It has become clear that our students are competing on a world stage. As stated by Thomas Friedman, the world is indeed “flat.” This matters to the American education system for many important reasons. First, the pay for “routine” work has plummeted as companies outsource this work to other countries where workers require far lower wages. Does this mean that American workers should do routine work for less? The answer should be “no,” if our country wishes to retain the quality of life that we have enjoyed over the past 100 years. Instead, as explained by the National Center on Education and the Economy in its book, *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, the quality of life in our country depends on Americans preparing for and securing the highest paying jobs in the world – the creative and innovative positions. This depends on the American education system changing its outcomes from a focus on conformity to a focus on creativity. We no longer need compliant graduates who have memorized a set of facts, who believe every answer is found in a book, or who have perfected the game of school – to memorize, regurgitate and dump. Instead, our country and our business partners demand graduates who are globally aware, financially literate, creative, adaptable and resilient, collaborative, ethical, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and communicators to accommodate the careers in this new day. These graduates will be the most qualified and highly sought after in the world. They will secure the highest paying jobs and stimulate growth and development in the communities they populate.

The schools and districts producing these graduates will generate higher property values as well as economic development in their communities.

In order to transition, DCSD will employ the following key District priorities: Choice, World-Class Education and System Performance. All of these priorities uphold the commitments DCSD is making to its students, employees, parents, and community members. In addition, all three strategies are designed to move DCSD toward our desired state – creating the opportunity for each of our students to be successful in a world we cannot fully predict. These strategies wrap around our commitments to create a plan for change.

Our Core Values

Our Core Values remain constant in an ever-changing world. They provide the foundation for our work and influence how we conduct ourselves and engage with others.

Educational Excellence

High expectations are the focus of everything we do. We challenge all people to acquire a foundation of knowledge and academic skills, and to achieve their highest potential.

Human Diversity

Varied beliefs and backgrounds strengthen a public education system. We respect differences which contribute to a better society for all human beings.

Individual Potential

Individuals develop within an environment that nurtures intellectual, social, emotional, physical and aesthetic growth.

Lifelong Learning

Education is a process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. We foster curiosity, motivation and the desire to learn that extends beyond school settings.

Productive Effort

The pursuit of greater knowledge and more powerful thinking demands hard work, perseverance and commitment.

Shared Responsibility

The partnerships among parents, students, staff and community members are characterized by mutual commitment and collaborative effort.

Ethical Behavior

Our actions are distinguished by the highest standards of personal behavior, including trust, honesty, fairness, integrity and mutual respect.

Continuous Improvement

Our District, its systems and processes will be subject to continual scrutiny and improvement. We will be recognized for management by fact, results focus and a long-range outlook.



Our Commitments

Our Commitments summarize our promises to our students, parents, employees, and community. They are based on our Core Values and provide a broad philosophy that filters our daily work.

Commitment to our Students. Douglas County School District is committed to the success of our students as lifelong learners and critical thinkers. We value all students as individuals with visions of their own futures and connections to the world, and we will guide them toward their full potential. DCSD will encourage our students to build meaningful relationships with their peers, teachers, administrators, and staff. DCSD is committed to providing our students with physically and emotionally safe educational environments, the necessary tools for learning, and the freedom to explore their many options in life.

Commitment to our Parents and Families. Douglas County School District is committed to welcoming, encouraging and supporting parents and family members as key partners in the education of our students. We value parents' ideas, opinions and concerns, knowing they have an understanding of how issues and events affect their students and families. DCSD will keep our parents and families engaged and informed with current information. DCSD is committed to providing our parents and families with choices to meet each student's individual learning needs.

Commitment to our Employees. Douglas County School District is committed to respecting and supporting all employees. We value the skills and experiences our colleagues possess – qualities which allow them to meet high expectations and fulfill varied responsibilities. DCSD empowers our employees to make decisions about students' successes in a collaborative environment. We encourage staff members to embrace the choices they have in career and professional development opportunities. DCSD is committed to retaining our staff through competitive compensation and by promoting an environment in which employees share their passion for their work.

Commitment to our Community. Douglas County School District is committed to engaging our community members as partners in providing a world-class education for our students. We value the support of our community to graduate well-rounded citizens who will make meaningful contributions to our society. DCSD will responsibly use the taxpayer resources provided by our community, acting as good neighbors and in the best interest of our students. DCSD is committed to being honest stewards of the property entrusted to us by our community, and will be accountable to them through transparent dealings and the academic growth of our students.

Our Vision

is to help students acquire the knowledge and abilities to be responsible citizens who contribute to our society.

Our Priorities

Our Priorities are inspired by our Core Values, our Commitments and the changing needs of our students, profession and community. They provide perspective in relation to our vision for change in Douglas County School District.

Choice



Providing each child the maximum opportunity for success

- Communicating the unique qualities of each school to our students, employees, parents, and community gives all students the highest possibility for success.
- Empowering every school to achieve their desired state provides many learning opportunities for students and synergy in our schools.

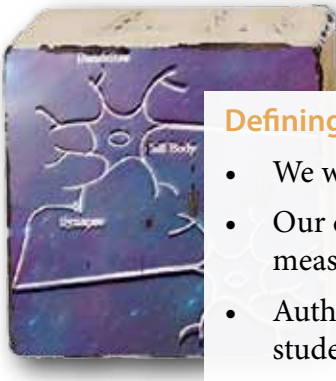
World-Class Education



Achieving sustainable learning for the 21st century

- Students must be prepared to compete on a world stage for jobs that require a high level of creativity and innovation.
- Sustainable learning is essential and requires the most important information to be taught in a way that can be retained, that stretches across content areas, and that incorporates the tools our young people will be required to use in the workforce.
- Education is more personalized, and students develop a deep understanding of self, world, career, and their own pathway to success.

System Performance



Defining and measuring what matters most

- We will define what matters most to our stakeholders.
- Our development of a cutting-edge System Performance Framework will measure student, educator, school, leader, and District performance.
- Authentic measurements will lead to continuous improvement for our students and allow our stakeholders to remain informed.

blueprint for choice

Choice is our commitment to provide each child the maximum opportunity for success.

Douglas County School District believes matching students and employees to a learning model or school creates a level of synergy not found in historic models by creating the highest probability of success for all. There is no question that Douglas County has amazing schools throughout our District, and there is no plan to change schools or models producing excellent outcomes.

Through Choice, DCSD plans to communicate the unique qualities of each school to our students, employees, parents, and community so that all stakeholders are better equipped to find a perfect match. In addition, DCSD will provide opportunities for schools and their communities to explore models of educational excellence that produce creative, globally aware, critical thinkers who work well together in teams, problem solve and are resilient. These models will accomplish our desired outcomes through various approaches to instruction and development. Schools wishing to transform, in collaboration with parents and the community, will be supported in doing so through Choice.

DCSD is committed to making sure that every child has the opportunity to find his or her niche. We believe we have now, and will continue to have in the future, the very best schools in the state – if not the country and the world.

DCSD prides itself in offering innovative programs designed to meet the educational needs and desires of students, parents, staff and the community. We embrace school choice by offering a wide variety of pathways to learning, including: neighborhood schools, magnet, charter, online, home education, contract schools, and scholarships to private partner schools that contract with and meet all DCSD conditions of eligibility.

More choices
equal
More opportunities

The following **timeline** provides details for the actions to **transition** our excellent 20th century system into a **world-class** 21st century education system.

1. Improve Information and Communication

Redesign DCSD website Spring 2011
 Develop School Selector Tool..... Spring 2011
 Develop Diagnostic Tools Spring 2012
 Develop School Landing Pages..... Spring 2011
 Develop School Performance Pages..... Spring 2012
 Develop and post resources for new school developers Spring 2011
 Develop and post all Online Learning opportunities Spring 2011
 Develop and post a Comprehensive Charter School authorization process Spring 2011
 Develop web content, mailings, and online forms for Home Education Spring 2011
 Develop School Choice Catalog..... Summer 2011
 Develop and Implement a School Showcase Spring 2012

2. Create Flexibility and Empowerment through Policy and Procedure Change

Develop a DCSD Comprehensive Charter School authorization process Spring 2011
 Explore CDE's model charter school application and contract Spring 2011
 Revise Open Enrollment policy (including extension of open enrollment window)..... Spring 2011
 Provide clear expectations coupled with menu of options to the extent possible.....Ongoing

3. Create a "Level Playing Field" for all DCSD Schools

Review disbursement of all federal, state and local revenues to DCSD schools Fall 2011
 Review all DCSD schools' charges for District services Spring 2011
 Explore feasibility of more autonomy in student-based budgeting process..... Spring 2012
 Create a School Autonomy Focus Group Summer 2011
 Include all DCSD schools in Long-Range Planning Process Winter 2011
 Investigate feasibility of bond refinancing for charter schools..... Fall 2011
 Investigate feasibility of DCSD ownership of charter facilities Fall 2011

4. Provide Multiple Learning Opportunities or Pathways for Students

Develop a five-year plan for Home Education Fall 2012
 Pilot a DCSD Home Education program Fall 2011
 Explore feasibility of additional contract school options Spring 2011
 Design and Implement a Student Scholarship program..... Fall 2011
 Support all DCSD schools in exploration and optional school transformation Spring 2011
 Empower all DCSD schools to create and realize plans/visions Ongoing
 Investigate special education models for Charter schools Spring 2011



world-class education



World-Class Education

achieves sustainable learning for
the 21st century.

Douglas County School District recognizes that the world has changed quickly, and DCSD is committed to providing each student with a World-Class Education. This means that our students will be able to compete against students across the nation and the world for the most sought-after careers.

A World-Class Education Requires:

- Content be a vehicle for developing important skills
- The most important information is identified and taught deeply
- Teaching produces sustainable learning
- The most important content and skills are assessed authentically
- All learning activities are relevant and naturally integrative
- “Digital Native” students are engaged
- Through advocacy, students develop deep understanding of self, world, career, and their own personal pathway to success
- Intervention is personalized
- Technology is a tool – among many others
- Students learn from mistakes through restorative practices

DCSD graduates will successfully demonstrate all Colorado State Standards – Grade Level Expectations (GLE) and 21st century skills through World-Class Education. Students will have the opportunity to develop and receive feedback on 21st century skills, such as creativity, communication, global awareness, critical thinking, problem solving, resiliency, financial literacy, health/wellness, ethics, democracy, civic responsibility, systems thinking, and collaboration/teamwork.

DCSD is committed to producing sustainable learning by focusing its instruction and learning activities on analysis, synthesis, application, evaluation, and creation. Each DCSD school will determine their own processes for producing the above-mentioned World-Class Education expectations.

It is estimated that 1.5 exabytes (1.5×10 to the 18th power) of unique information will be generated worldwide this year. This is estimated to be **greater than in the previous 5,000 years.**

The amount of new technical information is doubling every two years. For students beginning a technical degree program at a university, this means that **half of what they learn in their first year of study will be outdated by their third year of study.**



The following **timeline** provides details for the actions to **transition** our excellent 20th century system into a **world-class** 21st century education system.

1. Update Curriculum/ Student Outcome Expectations

Develop expectations regarding DCSD's guaranteed and viable curriculum Spring 2011
Develop expectations regarding integration of 21st century skills Spring 2011
Review and Update Board Ends..... Winter 2011
Offer professional development on backward design (UBD) Summer 2011

2. Update Assessment Expectations

Develop expectations regarding assessment of curriculum Spring 2011
Develop expectations regarding assessment of skills Fall 2012
Develop 21st century skill rubrics Spring 2013
Offer professional development on authentic assessment development Fall 2011

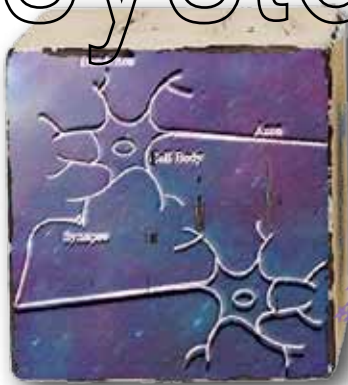
3. Update Instruction Expectations

Develop expectations regarding sustainable learning..... Spring 2012
Develop expectations regarding technology as a tool..... Spring 2011
Develop expectations regarding digital natives' needs Spring 2011
Offer professional development on sustainable learning strategies..... Summer 2011

4. Expectations for Student Success

Develop advocacy expectations including personal pathways/plans Spring 2012
Develop/support advocacy pilot at two middle schools Spring 2011
Develop Expectations for Restorative Practices..... Spring 2012
Develop/implement differentiated professional development model..... Summer 2011

system performance



System Performance

empowers us to define and measure what matters most.

For too long in education we have relied on standardized assessments for information regarding our performance. As a result, we have acquiesced to measuring what is easy instead of measuring what is most important. This common practice has produced many unintended consequences in education throughout the world.

Douglas County School District is committed to authentically assessing that which matters most – even if what is most important is very difficult to measure. We are committed to doing this with regard to student performance, educator performance, leader performance, school performance, and District performance through our System Performance Framework.

DCSD, in collaboration with our employees, our schools and our community, will identify the most important outcomes for each of these groups. Next, DCSD will work with assessment partners to develop valid and reliable assessments that will authentically measure each important outcome. This data will inform our work as well as our compensation system, our accreditation processes, our parent communication and more.

We are committed to providing our students, parents, employees, and community with consistent information and reporting on how we are doing regarding the most important outcomes in our system through System Performance.

The cutting-edge System Performance Framework currently in development demonstrates our commitment to:

- Inform and engage the community
- Empower and support parents
- Retain and attract the highest-quality employees
- Ensure the highest level of student success

The framework will promote continuous improvement and innovation to ensure that what is being counted actually counts.

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1. Update Evaluation and Develop Performance Frameworks

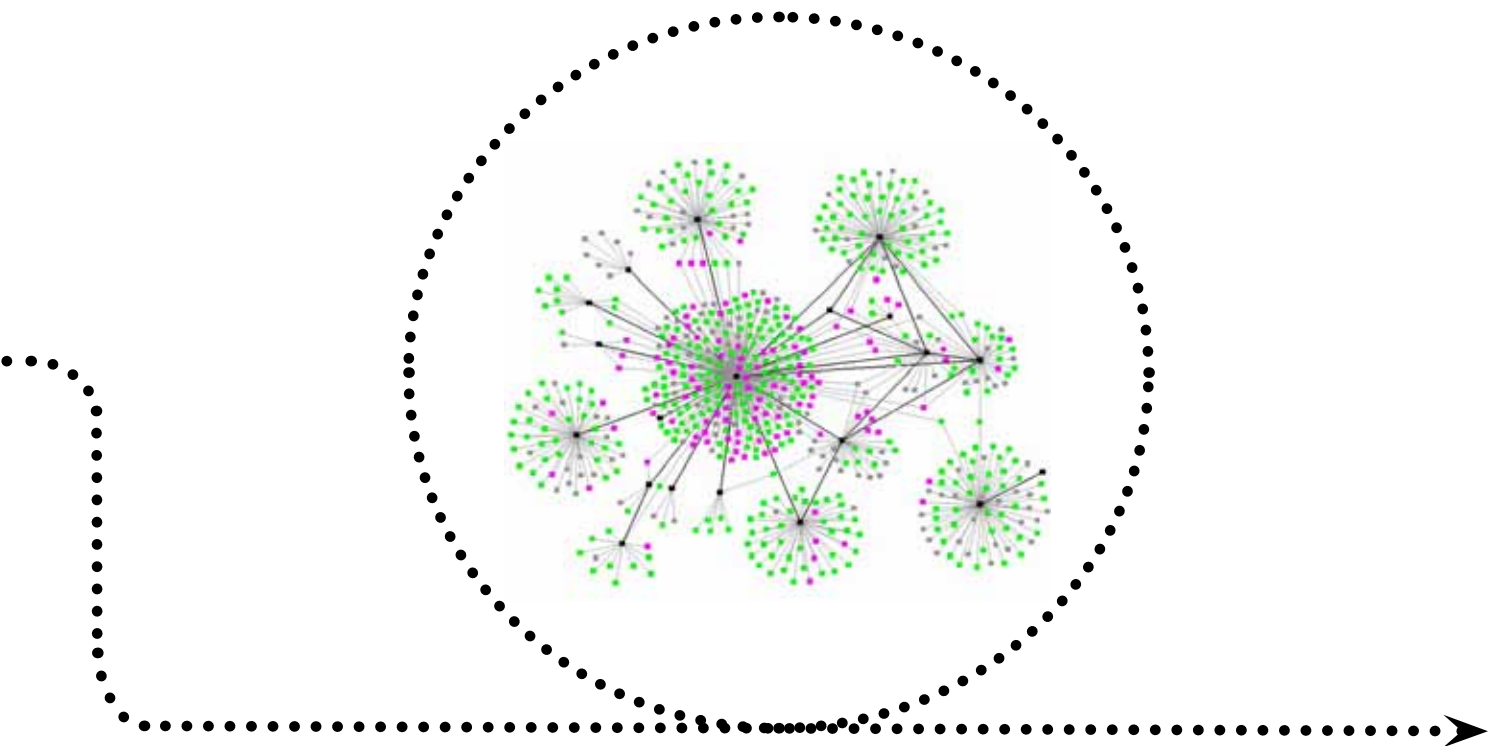
- Introduce a Student Performance Assessment System including District expectations Fall 2011
- Implement an Educator Performance Assessment System (CITE) Fall 2011
- Introduce a Leader Performance Assessment System (CITE Phase II) Fall 2012
- Introduce a School Performance Assessment System including District expectations Fall 2011
- Introduce a District Performance Assessment System Fall 2012
 - Identify most important outcomes of the District. Fall 2012
 - Identify/develop assessments to authentically measure District performance Fall 2012
 - Develop communication strategies for sharing District performance Fall 2012
 - Integrate District performance results in continuous improvement planning Fall 2012

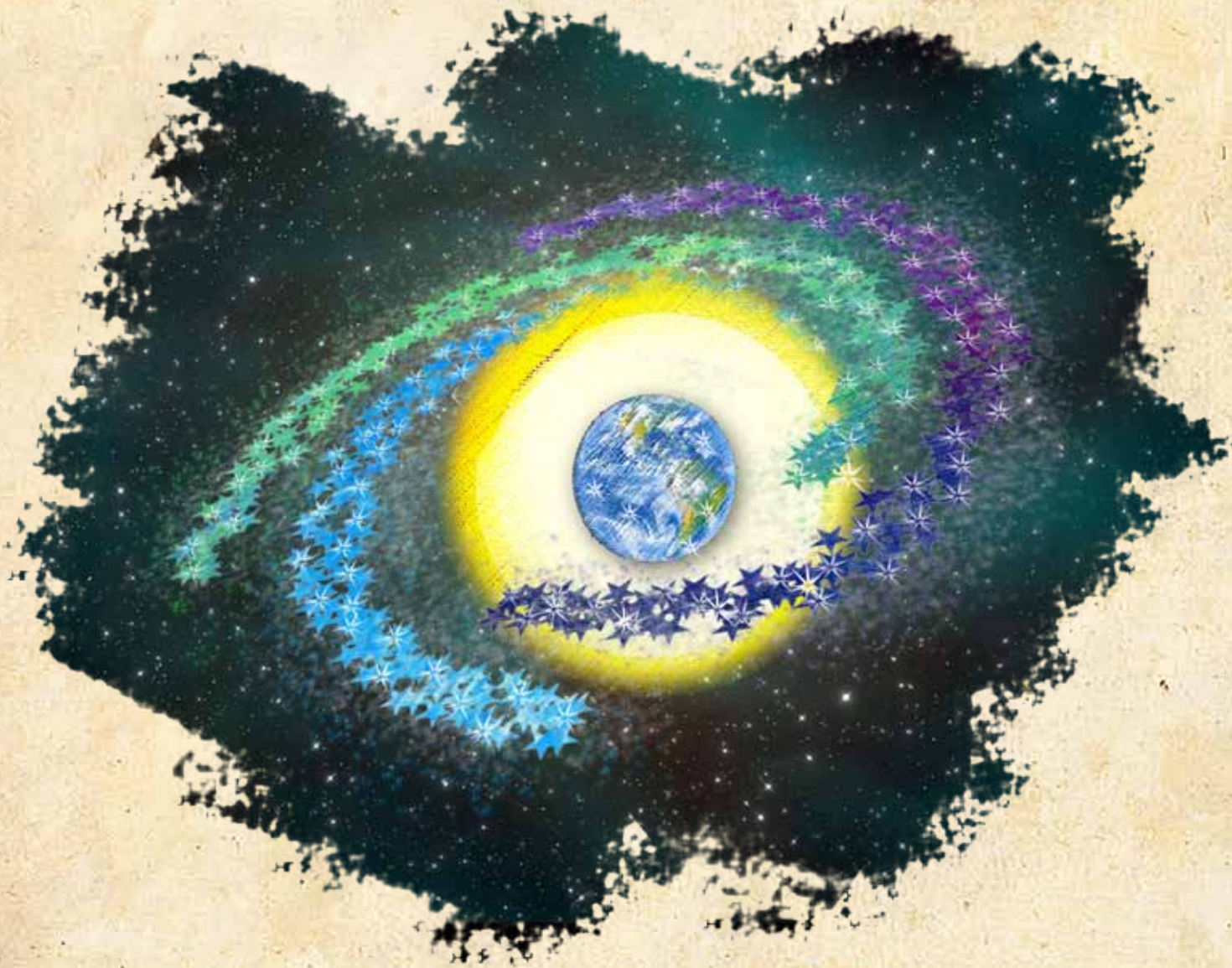
2. Create Balanced Assessments

- Implement the assessment platform Spring 2011
- Implement balanced assessments. Fall 2012

3. Reform Compensation

- Develop a new, innovative pay-for-performance compensation system Spring 2012
- Implement the new pay-for-performance compensation system Fall 2012





Douglas County
School District

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

