

## Frequently Asked Questions: Announcement of DPS Superintendent Finalist

*Denver Public Schools' search for a new superintendent has reached its final phase with the announcement Nov. 29 of a sole finalist, Susana Cordova. Learn more about Susana and next steps:*

### Who is the finalist for DPS superintendent?

**Susana Cordova**, currently the district's deputy superintendent and a nationally recognized educational leader, is a DPS graduate and parent who has spent her career in DPS classrooms as a bilingual secondary teacher, principal of a high-needs elementary school and administrator whose responsibilities now include direct supervision of all 165 district-run schools and an annual budget of more than \$130 million. A first-generation college graduate, Susana says she is committed to ensuring all students have caring, knowledgeable adults to support them as she was supported growing up in DPS. Her focus on equity has led to the transformation of services for students learning English and improved literacy rates for young learners across DPS.

Read Susana's bio, cover letter and resume at [supersearch.dpsk12.org](https://supersearch.dpsk12.org).

### How was the finalist selected?

After a national search that began in August and included contact with 122 potential candidates, 41 submitted applications by the Oct. 15 deadline. Denver school board members reviewed all applicant materials and selected 14 for serious consideration; they then chose to interview seven applicants. Following lengthy interviews with each applicant, board members agreed to move forward with Susana as a finalist. Learn more about the [recruitment, application and initial interview process](#).

### How did the community's input factor into the selection of the finalist?

In more than 100 meetings and via an online survey, more than 4,500 students, parents, educators and community members shared their input about what's needed in the next leader of Denver's schools. Board members drew heavily on this input in reaching out to potential candidates, narrowing the applicant pool and forming interview questions. Read the [community engagement report](#).

### Why is there just one finalist?

The Board of Education sought to present multiple finalists and was on track to do so. However, prior to the selection of finalists, the only other candidates that matched the qualifications of Susana withdrew from consideration. The Board of Education elected to move forward with the process, believing it to be thorough, exhaustive, and conducted with high integrity.

### Why would a candidate withdraw their name?

In high-profile searches of this nature, many candidates are unwilling to be named unless they are a sole finalist because of concerns about potential impact on a current or future position. For example, if a candidate already is employed as a school superintendent, they might be concerned about how their current school board and community could react to the news. In some cases, a candidate might refuse to be named a finalist if they are not the sole finalist – and

essentially guaranteed the position. Not everyone is comfortable with the possibility of publicly seeking a position and failing to achieve it.

**Can you release the other candidate names?**

No, candidate names prior to the finalist stage are protected under state law in searches of this nature.

**Is it common to have only one finalist for a position like this?**

There are countless examples of large public institutions like DPS across the country that yielded a single finalist in similar searches. Local examples include the last two CU Presidents, Cherry Creek Schools District Superintendent, CU Denver Chancellor and the leaders of PERA and History Colorado.

**What are the next steps?**

There will be a period of final engagement with our students, families, educators and community members, which will be a necessary component of the Board’s decision-making process and will inform their final decision on December 17<sup>th</sup>. This will take place between Wednesday, December 5 and Friday, December 14. Additional details are forthcoming.

**Does this mean that the finalist is guaranteed to be Superintendent?**

The Board will meet Dec. 17 to make that decision and it will require a vote of the board members. The period of final engagement with our students, families, educators and community members is an important component of the board’s decision-making process and will inform their final decision on Dec. 17.

**How can I make sure I’m receiving the latest news about the search?**

Search updates and information are posted on our [supersearch.dpsk12.org](http://supersearch.dpsk12.org) website, where you can sign up to receive email updates specifically about the search. You can also email [supersearch@dpsk12.org](mailto:supersearch@dpsk12.org) with specific questions, input or feedback about the search. In addition, related news is shared on our DPS Twitter account ([@DPSSuperSearch](https://twitter.com/DPSSuperSearch)) and [Facebook page](#), including [six video updates](#) from school board members since September. Finally, search updates are also shared in our regular weekly e-newsletters to DPS staff and community; sign up [here](#) to receive the community newsletter.