

Susana Cordova

What drives me: “When I look back on my life, I know that several important educators in DPS made the difference for me. I am committed to ensuring that all students in DPS have caring, knowledgeable adults who will support them as I was supported and who will create the systems and structures to prepare them for their future.”

Current role: Deputy Superintendent, Denver Public Schools; appointed by former Superintendent Tom Boasberg in 2016.

Oversees a staff of more than 5,000 in 165 district-run schools and all central academic departments, with an annual budget of more than \$130 million.

The DPS deputy superintendent leads the Leadership, Teaching and Learning Division, which includes elementary and secondary education; English language acquisition; professional learning for educators; and student equity and opportunity, including services for students with special needs.

Five key achievements:

- Led efforts to redesign the district’s English language acquisition services; English learners in DPS have improved from performing below state averages to outperforming their peers across Colorado.
- Led efforts to increase reading proficiency rates of students in kindergarten through grade 3, resulting in 6 percent increases in third-grade reading scores on the CMAS and Colorado Spanish Language Assessment. DPS students now score within three points of the state average on the English exam and outperform the state average by three points on the Spanish exam.
- Established support systems for Denver’s lowest-performing schools, developing an approach that invests in school leadership and targeted support from district teams. These struggling schools are now more than doubling the gains of the district’s average improvement.
- Oversaw increase in the number of graduates from 3,633 in 2016 to approximately 4,800 in 2018.
- Led efforts that resulted in increases in the number of students taking Advanced Placement exams, concurrent enrollment courses and IB exams while maintaining passing rates.

Connection to DPS: DPS graduate. Began teaching career in 1989 as a bilingual secondary teacher before becoming a principal and moving into district leadership. Parent of one DPS graduate and one current DPS student. Children have attended district-run schools, including magnet programs.

Highest level of education: Master’s degree in education, University of Colorado-Denver, 2000

Three key honors and recognition:

- [Leader to Learn From](#), Education Week, 2018
- Honorary doctorate, University of Denver, 2017
- [Latino Educator Champion of Change Award Winner](#), White House Initiative, 2014

Recent video highlighting this finalist:

[A Perpetual Fight for Equity for All Students](#), Education Week, 2018