



620 Wilcox Street
Castle Rock, Colorado 80104

We value your feedback!

Please scan the QR code or visit the URL listed below to take a short survey on the school district's proposal.

bit.ly/DCSD-survey2026
(cap sensitive)



Dear Douglas County Resident,

The Douglas County School District (DCSD) is dedicated to ensuring that all students are empowered to meet their future with competence, purpose and optimism.

Schools are an integral part of our neighborhoods, our economies and our lives. As the top-performing school district in the Denver metro area and the largest employer in our county, we have many responsibilities that we take very seriously.

We must continue to invest in a high-quality school system, which provides our children with bright futures, builds a pipeline for our future workforce, and attracts businesses and residents to our thriving community keeping our home values strong.

Your past investments in our school district have provided strong returns, including higher test scores and graduation rates (the highest in Denver metro!), teacher retention, and staff morale. Our school buildings are also providing safer and more comfortable learning environments for our kids. Thank you!

We must continue to proactively care for our incredible teachers and staff who create bright futures for our kids, every single day.

Thanks to our community, our school district currently has one of the lowest employee turnover rates in the area. However, we know all too well that could change, primarily due to our inability to keep up with the rising cost of living and housing in our county.

Although recent funding measures have improved our competitive position when it comes to teacher and staff compensation, the Douglas County School District remains seven percent (7%) below the average starting teacher salary in the Denver metro area. Continued investment in compensation for teachers and staff is necessary to be more competitive with neighboring school districts and to better keep pace with inflation, and to help our staff live in the community where they work.

Our school district must also reduce student waitlists for Career and Technical Education programming, including the trades, restore student programming that has been cut over the years, and continue to increase and maintain school security support.

This is why my staff and I recently recommended to the Board of Education that a \$54 million Mill Levy Override (MLO) be placed on the November 2026 ballot. If passed by voters, the proposed MLO would cost residential taxpayers approximately \$33.70 per year (about \$2.81 per month) for every \$100,000 in home value.

A 2026 MLO, if placed on the ballot and passed by voters, would enable our school district to:

- **Retain and attract top-quality teachers and staff** by providing salaries that are more competitive with neighboring school districts and better keep pace with inflation.
- **Increase and maintain school security support**, including school resource officers.
- **Reduce student waitlists for Career and Technical Education programming**, including the trades.
- **Restore student programming** such as instrumental music in elementary schools.

Next Steps for the MLO

The Board of Education will ultimately decide whether to place this measure on the ballot at a meeting in August. Over the next month, the Board will review community feedback as part of its decision-making. To help share your feedback, please consider completing a short online survey at bit.ly/DCSD-survey2026 (or scan the QR code above). The results will be shared with the Board and the community.

For me, recommending this MLO for the ballot is about ensuring that today's students have access to the same exceptional opportunities my children and so many others in our community were fortunate to receive.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our students, teachers, staff and community. Your past support has resulted in DCSD being the #1 school district in the Denver metro area. Our children's futures are brighter thanks to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Kane', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Erin Kane, Superintendent
Douglas County School District

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Mill Levy Override and why is it important?

A Mill Levy Override (MLO) is a voter-approved local funding measure that provides additional revenue directly to the school district. Unlike funding from the state of Colorado, MLO funding stays in the school district and is not offset by a reduction in state support. The additional local taxpayer support helps the school district maintain strong academic programs, retain and attract top-quality teachers and staff, improve student opportunities, and continue preparing students for long-term success.

What has the 2023 Mill Levy Override accomplished?

The 2023 voter-approved Mill Levy Override has delivered meaningful results for Douglas County School District. The funding has helped the school district recruit and retain top-quality teachers and staff, contributing to the lowest employee turnover rate of school districts in the Denver metro area. In addition, student achievement continues to rise (DCSD is now the top-scoring school district in the Denver metro area). It has also strengthened school safety by funding additional School Resource Officers (SROs) and Campus Security Specialists at all DCSD schools.

However, our school district still has work to do to make sure our teacher and staff pay is more competitive with neighboring school districts and to better keep pace with inflation.

How much more funding do other school districts receive compared to Douglas County Schools?

Neighboring school districts, including Cherry Creek and Littleton schools, continually pass voter-approved local measures to increase their funding. Because of this, our school district currently receives \$2,000 less per student than Cherry Creek School District and Littleton Public Schools (equivalent to a gap of \$130 million each year). Even though DCSD's general administration spending is far lower than neighboring districts, and past MLOs have enabled the school district to make some progress in teacher pay, it is still challenging to pay competitively and keep pace with inflation.

Isn't the State of Colorado responsible for funding our schools?

Each year, the Colorado General Assembly determines the base level of funding that each school district receives. That funding comes from a combination of local property taxes and state funding. Under the state funding formula, increases in local property values do not increase the school district's funding or budget. Instead, when local property values increase, the state reduces its contribution to the district.

How does the school district ensure that these tax dollars are spent as promised?

The district has a citizen-led Mill Bond Oversight Committee (MBOC) that regularly reviews the progress of projects and programs funded by voter-approved MLOs and bonds. The committee helps ensure that all expenditures align with the purposes approved by voters in the ballot language. The MBOC is an independent, volunteer committee made up of community members from across Douglas County. The district also has a citizen-led Fiscal Oversight Committee.

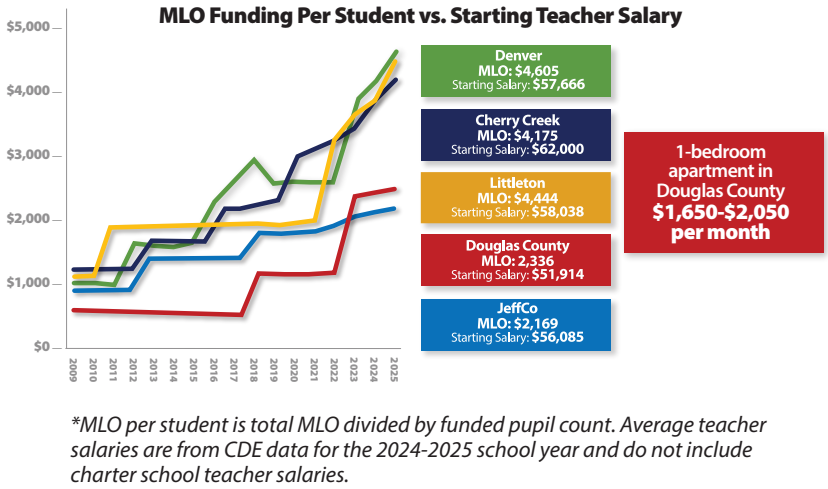
Can't DCSD just make budget cuts?

The DCSD Board of Education, finance team and oversight committees continually look for ways to more efficiently operate the school district. In fact, due to reduced public school funding at the state level, the school district will be cutting more than \$15 million from its budget in the coming year. In addition, DCSD spends 3% on its administration versus the 5% statewide average, with more than 73% of the budget dedicated to teachers and paraprofessionals with direct student contact. All of this leaves very little room to cut more without touching the classroom.

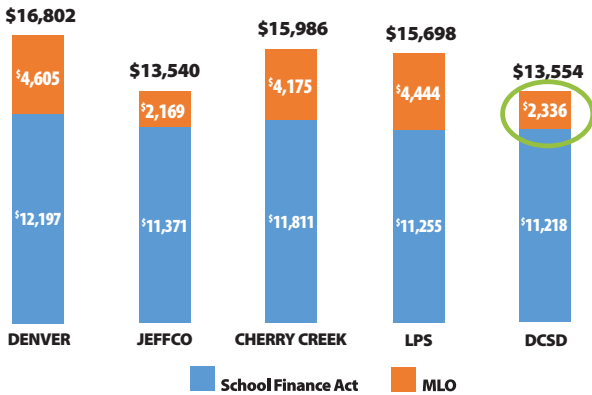
Since 2013, DCSD's overall tax rate has dropped significantly from 22.5 mills to 18.1 mills. Because past MLOs have been fixed dollar amounts, over time, as more homes are built and the population grows in Douglas County, the cost per household decreases.

Learn more and provide feedback:

bit.ly/DCSD-survey2026 (cap sensitive)



District Funding Comparison



2026 School District Tax Rate

