



November 14, 2018

Dear Roots Friends and Supporters:

It is with a heavy heart that we write to inform you that the Roots Board of Directors voted on November 9 that this school year will be the final year of operations for Roots Elementary.

It became clear earlier this month that the partnership that we had been exploring with Rocky Mountain Prep was not going to materialize. Our teams worked collaboratively and diligently to explore this opportunity and, unfortunately, we weren't able to find a partnership pathway that worked well for both of our organizations.

Our school was hit particularly hard this year by low enrollment due in large part to the declining school-age population in the neighborhood. As we looked ahead to next year and beyond as a stand-alone school, we recognized that without a significant increase in student enrollment, which is unlikely given the neighborhood trends, we would not have the resources needed to provide the rigorous program emphasizing our core values of grit, relationships, ownership and wonder (GROW) that our scholars deserve.

Launched in 2015, Roots was founded to provide a high-quality option for students in North Park Hill. Conceived with a vision of high levels of personalization and flexibility to meet students where they are, and an equal focus on socio-emotional learning, the model has adapted over time to best meet the needs of the community. The school has grown to become the highest-performing in the neighborhood on DPS's school performance framework, achieving a green rating on academic growth for two years in a row by providing a trauma-informed environment attuned to the full and varying needs of our scholars. But, ultimately, without a sustainable level of resources over time, we would not be able to give our scholars what they deserve. The board has put our scholars at the forefront of this decision and is hopeful that other strong school options will emerge to fill the gap that will exist without Roots.

While Roots will not be the enduring solution, we are proud of the effort we made and results we achieved. We gave it our all. As a community, we have a moral imperative to do better to serve our highest-need communities. Far more than the same-old, same-old is required to achieve an equitable education in communities most impacted by poverty and generations of racial injustice. We must not let ourselves off the hook for doing more to support those that can most benefit from additional resources and options.

As we prepare to end this chapter at Roots, we do so with two thoughts uppermost in mind.

First, as we communicated with our staff and families, we intend to finish this final school year on a high note. And to work personally and individually with families and staff alike to find the best setting and opportunities for each of them going forward.

Second, we feel a profound gratitude to our partners, supporters, and community members who provided the resources and ideas necessary to launch Roots and help it to grow and evolve. The impact of this support has been immense and is immeasurable.

Let us close with a quote by way of perspective.



"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

- President Theodore Roosevelt

Our disappointment is tempered by our deep appreciation. Thank you.

Eric Sonderrmann

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