

# Byers Jr. High – A Call to Action!



## Your help is needed now!

Denver Public School's (DPS) financial problems are well known. Budget shortfalls have been publicized for the past few years. In order to help with these shortfalls, DPS is considering selling the Byers School, a Historic Landmark. Residents in the surrounding communities believe such a decision would be short-sighted. It is up to us to help DPS make the wiser long-term choice.

The community vision for Byers Jr. High School is that DPS should preserve and maintain this asset for future generations. Schools play a key role in attracting families and strengthening neighborhoods. Byers Jr. High School is located in the center of three predominately single-family, low-density neighborhoods in an area of Denver that is adding children and families every year.

### Consider the following points:

- In the 2003, taxpayers approved an \$8 million bond to preserve Byers as a school. Byers was prominently featured in the media campaign to induce voter support. However, DPS later reallocated that money to other schools.
- In calculating the numbers of families in nearby neighborhoods, DPS used general population growth patterns which do not appear to include our growing family population. Lincoln Elementary grew from 60% capacity to 85% capacity during the five-year period ending October, 2008. By May 2009, Lincoln has reached 93% capacity. Including the preschooler population, Lincoln is at 111%. Collectively, southeast Denver elementary schools are at 116% capacity.
- Additionally, the calculations of future families did not include the families who will reside on the 120 acres of nearby Transit Oriented Developments at the Alameda Station and old Gates Factory. Thousands of new residents and families will be added, and the children will require nearby schools.
- DPS stated that Jr. High School and High School utilization in Southern part of Denver is at 50% and 82%, respectively. However, DPS included some schools in this assessment that are more than 5 miles from Washington Park. Moreover, many schools that DPS proposed as alternates to Byers are west of I-25. This poses significant travel barriers to residents in Baker and West Washington Park.
- There are other interim uses for this property which would preserve the possibility of it being turned back into a school in the future. One example: The Pearl Street Arts Center has proposed leasing Byers to create a resource center for artists <http://pearlstreetartscenter.art.officelive.com/default.aspx>
- DPS staff and the DPS Board of Education have made the strategic decision to focus on "large format schools". Byers is considered a large format school with 850 seats. Selling Byers would be a departure from DPS' strategy to retain larger buildings.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?** Turn the page over

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Write to the DPS and the DPS Board of Education!! Give them your feedback, let them know what the residents near the Byers School really think.

Superintendent Tom Boasberg: [superintendent@dpsk12.org](mailto:superintendent@dpsk12.org)  
Jeannie Kaplan, District 3 – Byers District [jeannie\\_kaplan@dpsk12.org](mailto:jeannie_kaplan@dpsk12.org)  
(District 3 extends into East Washington Park to Mississippi)

David Suppes, DPS COO [David\\_Suppes@dpsk12.org](mailto:David_Suppes@dpsk12.org)  
Will Lee-Ashley, DPS Lead Analyst [WILL\\_LEE-ASHLEY@dpsk12.org](mailto:WILL_LEE-ASHLEY@dpsk12.org)  
Marc Waxman, DPS New Schools [marc\\_waxman@dpsk12.org](mailto:marc_waxman@dpsk12.org)

Bruce Hoyt, District 1 [bruce\\_hoyt@dpsk12.org](mailto:bruce_hoyt@dpsk12.org)  
(District 1 includes WWP below Alameda, Baker, and E Wash Park below Mississippi)  
Michelle Moss, District 2 and VP [michelle\\_moss@dpsk12.org](mailto:michelle_moss@dpsk12.org)  
Kevin Patterson, District 4 [kevin\\_patterson@dpsk12.org](mailto:kevin_patterson@dpsk12.org)  
Arturo Jimenez, District 5 [arturo\\_jimenez@dpsk12.org](mailto:arturo_jimenez@dpsk12.org)  
Theresa Pena, Board President [theresa\\_pena@dpsk12.org](mailto:theresa_pena@dpsk12.org)  
Jill Conrad, At Large Board Member [jill\\_conrad@dpsk12.org](mailto:jill_conrad@dpsk12.org)

2. Attend the upcoming DPS community input meeting on May 20th at the Slavens School (3000 S Clayton St) at 5:30pm.
3. Attend the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the School Board. The meeting is at 900 Grant Street, starts at 5:30 and has a public comment period starting at 6:30PM. Each speaker will have three minutes to speak, but groups of four or more people speaking on the same topic will have 10 minutes collectively. To sign up to speak, please call the Board Office at 720-423-3210 by 5 p.m. the day before the public comment session.
4. Distribute pamphlets door-to-door. We need help canvassing the following neighborhoods: Speer, East Washington Park, and Baker.
5. Volunteer to help and/or give us your ideas. Email: [mike.rusconi@gmail.com](mailto:mike.rusconi@gmail.com)
6. Contribute financially!! The West Washington Park Neighborhood Association (WWPNA) is a 100% volunteer organization. We need your financial help to pay for these flyers and to continue advocating for residential concerns such as Byers Jr. High School. Contributions can be sent to WWPNA, P.O. Box 9866, Denver, CO 80209

Additional information is posted on the WWPNA home page at [wwpna.org](http://wwpna.org).

To keep informed on a weekly basis, sign up for the WWPNA listserv. Access the WWPNA home page at [wwpna.org](http://wwpna.org). Click on the Email List link in the welcoming message from the Association. WWPNA sends two to four listserv messages per month, and only on topics that affect our residents. Our privacy policy states that we do not share or sell our residents information for any purpose outside of the Association. No exceptions.

For any questions or concerns, please contact Mike Rusconi at [mike.rusconi@gmail.com](mailto:mike.rusconi@gmail.com) or Charlie Busch by email at [president@wwpna.org](mailto:president@wwpna.org) or by phone at 303-722-6220.