RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF RAISING MINIMUM WAGES

WHEREAS, Colorado’s minimum wage workers are struggling to afford housing, health care, child care, and other basic necessities; and

WHEREAS, average rents in Denver have increased 48% between 2010 – 2017 while wages only increased 11%. Even though average DPS wages have risen faster than this, our employees still experience a gap between the increase in cost of living and increase in wages. Hardworking Coloradans should not be forced out of their communities because wages are not keeping up with rents and other living costs; and

WHEREAS, our students and families living in poverty face unique challenges of housing instability, challenged access to mental and physical health care, and an opportunity gap that exists before even starting kindergarten. These families are often forced to choose between rent and other necessities for their children; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies document a strong relationship between income and academic achievement, with income consistently shown to be one of the strongest predictors of academic status; and

WHEREAS, increasing the minimum wage boosts job retention, raises earnings and consumer spending across Colorado, and leads to Coloradans spending more money in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, the public welfare, health, and prosperity of Denver requires wages sufficient to ensure a decent and healthy life for all workers in Denver and their families. The City and County recently passed a measure to create a $15/hour minimum wage for city employees and contractors by 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Denver Public Schools Board of Education values the ability of local governments to act on the values and needs of their residents and to promote a fair and accessible economy. DPS has consistently invested in raising the wages of our school support roles:

- In 2015, we instituted a minimum wage of $12 / hour
- In 2018, we revisited this minimum wage and raise it to $12.50 / hour for food workers and paraprofessionals and $13.50 / hour for custodians
- We have set aside approximately $3 million to offer additional raises for these critical support roles going into 2019-20

WHEREAS, in negotiating the recent Pro Comp agreement with the Denver Classroom Teachers Association, DPS has consistently emphasized the importance it places on investing more in salaries both for our DCTA educators and for our school support roles.
WHEREAS, it will cost approximately $9 million for DPS to raise its minimum wage to $15 and raise other salaries in that range so as not to compress salaries. We believe that DPS can get here by 2023 and commit to making investments towards this goal along the way.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education supports local and state efforts to increase the minimum wage. We believe that local control of the minimum wage by local government entities is in the best interest of advancing the unique needs of communities across Colorado. These efforts to increase the minimum wage are in service of our staff, our students and our community at large.

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Anne Rowe, President     Carrie A. Olson, Ph.D., Secretary