

*Following is an open letter to the Denver School of the Arts (DSA), on behalf of the DSA Dance Family Organization (DFO), as well as parents of DSA dance majors that will be adding their endorsements over the coming week.*

*This letter is extended in the spirit of collaboration and support for the success of all students, faculty, administrators and families within the DSA Community. The DFO recognizes that change management is challenging; uncertainty is a normal part of the process and it is important to avoid unnecessary distractions or delays. In this context, it is important to note that the DFO has acted in as timely a manner as possible, while also taking responsibility to clarify conflicting information and complete conscientious analyses. DFO volunteers also stand ready to help expedite resolution of the issues cited in this letter in whatever capacity might be useful.*

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO DENVER SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Addressed to Ms. Linée Perroncel, DSA Principal and  
local administrative representative for Denver Public Schools  
Posted on April 30, 2008**

GIVEN THE FACT THAT the Dance Family Organization is composed of parents and friends of Denver School of the Arts' dance majors working together to support the DSA Department of Dance and Movement, enhance communications and connections within DSA's dance community and contribute as members of the DSA community at large.

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT the DFO shares the DSA Administration's stated commitment to preserve and promote DSA's integrity as a nationally-recognized arts school, as well as one of DPS's top performing academic schools.

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT, DSA's current high performance is produced using the current block schedule, which, even with its flaws, is based on a long history of nuancing a balance between arts and academic programming. In this context, it will be very important to fully understand the "whys" for this programming before implementing major shifts in the "how and when."

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT the DSA Administration is working on substantive academic scheduling issues that DFO does recognize to be important for all DSA students, including the challenge of integrating DPS's new, more stringent graduation requirements over the next few years.

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT the DSA Administration is proposing changes in the daily class scheduling system that could produce significant benefits for academic

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and electives programming, but also present significant challenges for DSA's dance arts education program, as well as the Arts Endorsed Diploma program. For example, it is currently unclear:

- How DSA will preserve the integrity of the Arts Endorsed Diplomas, including a schedule that supports senior projects in every major, including the 2008 Senior Dance Project; or
- How DSA will secure and authorize additional space and other resources that will be needed to meet safety and educational standards in the event that the three dance class times are compressed into two and the population of multi-level dance students ends up being increased by 50+ percent per session.

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT, the DFO has the utmost confidence and esteem for the Directors of DSA's Department of Dance and Movement, but the DFO also recognizes that impacts from the proposed schedule changes can never be fully offset by changes in the dance art curriculum nor through any other faculty-controlled program elements. Rather, due to the nature of dance art education, there will also be a need for supplementary space and other resources that can only be authorized through the DSA administration and/or DPS.

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT, like any art form, dance art education has idiosyncrasies and it is only responsible for DFO to point out that, in this particular circumstance:

- the space and other resources alluded to above are actually necessary conditions for sustaining a credible, substantive, safe and responsible dance art education program; and
- a failure to resolve these issues before the schedule is changed has significant potential for producing unintended consequences for DSA students, the program and the school.

AND, GIVEN THE FACT THAT, the DFO has confidence in and esteem for DSA's administrative team, but the DFO also recognizes that, in all probability, even a skilled team may require substantial time to address some of the more complex space and resource issues and to secure related authorizations.

**IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTS AND CONDITIONS, the DFO calls on the administrations of Denver School of the Arts and Denver Public Schools to preserve the positive potential of this schedule initiative and minimize unintended consequences by adopting a judicious approach and deferring implementation of proposed schedule changes as long a necessary to resolve mission-critical issues and secure necessary resources, even including the option of deferring implementation until the 2009-10 school year.**