

The Early Word

June 2018



DPS EARLY EDUCATION UPDATES

Welcome to our New Team Members!

Priscilla Hopkins

Early Childhood Instructional
Superintendent/Director

Priscilla Hopkins was born in Argentina, immigrated to the US at the age of four and learned to speak English in Kindergarten.

She began her educational career teaching second grade in a bilingual classroom in Southern California.

Priscilla is a graduate of the Ritchie Program for School Leaders and received her MA from the University of Denver in Educational Administration.



She has been an administrator in DPS since 2012 and most recently was the principal at Godsmen Elementary School. With the goal of providing children with a foundation for future success in school, she supported early childhood education in DPS through her work with implementation of Tools of the Mind classrooms at McGlone and Godsmen Elementary Schools. At McGlone Elementary, Priscilla also worked in collaboration with Headstart leaders to support students and their families.

DPS Shared Core Value: Integrity... in all we do!

Favorite children's book: When I Was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant

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Katherine Plog-Martinez

Director of Strategic Initiatives

Katherine comes to DPS and education from the nonprofit and positive youth development world. She has extensive experience (and love for) building public-private partnerships and thinking about policy to support our DPS students. She brings a strengths-based perspective to all of her work. In her almost eight years in DPS she has led the Department of Extended Learning & Community Schools, helped launch the Denver Afterschool Alliance and the SEAL Initiative, and helped guide the Whole Child Denver Plan Goal.

Hope for the year: That we continue to strengthen our approaches through partnership with families and community.

Favorite children's book:

Anything by Sandra Boynton, but she's particularly partial to Barnyard Dance.



Reyna Valdez

Administrative Assistant



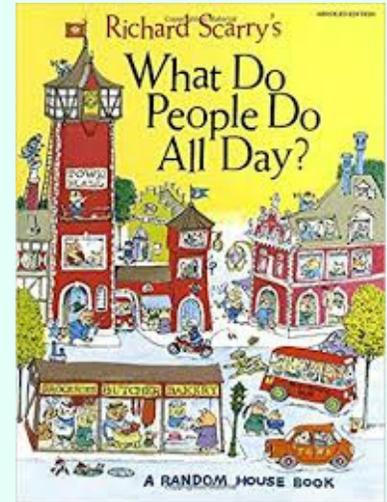
Reyna is a recent first generation college graduate with a BS in Human Development in Family Relations from the University of Colorado Denver. She worked with the University of Colorado Denver Pre-Collegiate and Academic Outreach Programs for five years, where she educated, motivated, and prepared students to be successful in secondary and post-secondary education with the ultimate goal of obtaining a college degree. Reyna has also worked as a community educator for non-profits in the Denver area.

Hope for the year: Continuous growth and connections

Favorite children's book: Corduroy by Don Freeman

What do people do all day? Early Education Summer Work!

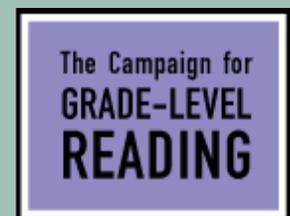
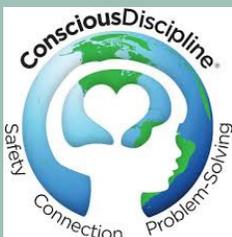
Did you know that most Early Education department staff work through the summer? These are some of the tasks that we're working on this summer:



- Finalizing Mission and Vision work
- Ordering materials for classrooms
- Updating the licensing handbook
- Strategic planning for the Early Education Department
- Preparing learning sessions for the 2018-19 school year
- Revising CO-Shines alternative pathways model with teachers
- Presenting sessions for early literacy specialists and teachers
- Presenting New Educator Welcome Week for ECE teachers
- Preparing new ECE classrooms that will open in August
- Updating partner coaching and training credentials in PDIS

We're always learning too!

Just a few of the sessions and conferences that staff are attending:



Mira's Mindfulness Minute

Try this short nature meditation from [Meditation Oasis](#)

Nature Meditation -- Eyes Open

This meditation can be done while sitting, standing or walking. Time spent in nature can always be a form of meditation when we put our full attention on what is around us -- the earth, trees, flowers, animals, fresh air, the breeze...

To intensify this experience, allow yourself to experience the sights, sounds and smells without labeling them and becoming mentally involved with them. Notice the tendency of the mind to name and evaluate everything -- "Oh, look at that beautiful bird. What kind is it? Is it here all winter or where does it go?" When these kinds of thoughts come up, let them go. Simply experience the colors, shape, sounds, movement of the bird or whatever else you are experiencing. Let it be an experience without meaning and without reference to any other experience.

Experience everything with an open awareness, as if you'd never experienced anything like it before. As always, when the mind wanders and becomes caught up in thought, simply bring it back to the experience of nature.



Important Dates

July 30 - Aug. 3 - New Educator Welcome Week

Aug. 13 - first day back for ECE teachers and paras

Aug. 20 - first day of school for students

How to Find Us

In person:

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On the phone:

720-423-2678, 720-423-2679 or 720-423-2676

On a computer:

<http://earlyeducation.dpsk12.org/>

