

FRIENDS OF MANUAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHAT MANUAL HIGH SCHOOL IS DOING RIGHT

The Friends of Manual believes in the staff and their dedication to providing innovative programs and a focus on students' culture and needs.

A recent headline by Chalkbeat (Sept. 10, 2018) stated, "After another low rating, Denver's Manual High could face state intervention." What the headline didn't say is that the rating is *preliminary*. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) created the School Performance Framework (SPF) to determine the level of success of each school preparing their graduates for more education or work. Each level of success is defined by a color with blue being the highest rating, red being the lowest, and orange, yellow and green in between. A look at the CDE website: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworkresults> emphasizes that the posted ratings are not final. Each school has the opportunity to "request to reconsider," a process that determines the final rating. In the meantime, give the school the opportunity to tell the story of what it's doing right.

The Friends of Manual (FOM) want to help tell that story. They believe in the school: its potential, direction, and the plan to get where it needs to be.

FOM was created in 1999 to help fill a much-needed funding gap. With the end of court-ordered desegregation (busing) Manual's school boundaries were changed to encompass only a high poverty area. Student achievement (measured by standardized tests) began to plummet. The need for additional academic, social, psychological and emotion support in order for students to succeed was apparent. State and district school funding was limited. FOM was created to raise additional funds through alumni and community support. Today the need remains: 90% of the school population qualifies for free or reduced-priced lunch and 96% are students of color. FOM's mission to support the academic achievement and overall high school experience of students at Manual is as strong as ever.

Here's what you need to know about Manual High School, the goals and programs:

History and Culture: As one of the first Denver schools to educate women and African Americans, Manual High School weaves a rich tapestry of tradition and community. Manual's alumni include mayors, civic leaders, actors/actresses, business leaders and change agents – all roll models for current students.

Innovation: As one of the first Denver Public Schools to be approved for Innovation status with the state, Manual's avant-garde approach to education equips each student with their own Chrome Book. Every core classroom has been updated with 21st century tools and technology. Teachers are continuously trained in the innovative practices of Personalized Learning for their classrooms. This allows for customization and differentiation in classroom lessons to meet the needs of our individual students.

Med School at Manual (aka MedConnect): Through a partnership with Denver Health and St. Joseph's Hospital, Manual offers one of the school district's first biomedical pathways for high school students. Currently, 89 students are in the Med Program at Manual. Fifty 9th graders are taking the Introduction to Health Careers class; 26 10th - 12th graders are taking the Human Body Systems class, 13 of whom are participating in our Career Coach or Mentoring program with St. Joseph's Hospital; and 13 11th - 12th graders are participating in the FACES For The Future work-based learning program at Denver Health. Dr. Katie Bakes, Denver Health emphasizes the purpose: "Denver Health wants to be a community responsive organization. We want to meet the needs of young people where they are, while raising the expectation for them to serve their community. Over time, we want to integrate all members into the professional community, where there are shared life experiences for the community we serve."

Early Colleges: Manual students come from a variety of diverse backgrounds that are historically underrepresented in degreed or professional fields. According to John Tricarico, Assistant Principal and Career Technology Education (CTE) Pathway Director, "Early Colleges provide the opportunity for acceleration into postsecondary courses while enrolled in their four years of high school." Concurrent Enrollment is one way for students to have access to postsecondary classes while in high school. Currently, 40 students are concurrently enrolled in classes taught by University of Colorado at Denver (UCD) professors at Manual and 10 students are attending classes at Community College of Denver (CCD) to earn an Associated Degree with their high school diploma.

Attendance: A primary goal of the 2018-19 school year is improved attendance. You cannot teach an empty seat. With that focus and improved communications with parents, attendance for the first month of the school year is 90%.

Other good news to share: Manual's Back to School night was well attended. In addition to sharing Manual's two main goals for the year – attendance and remediation-free college and career readiness, students managed a fresh foods market, community partners provided a community fair and the evening ended with a BBQ.

FOM remains dedicated to providing the volunteers and funds needed to give the students opportunities on par with other DPS schools. To volunteer or donate, go to www.friendsofmanual.org.