

**Denver Urban Debate League
Attachment - Evaluation Results**



**Summary of Denver Urban Debate League (DUDL) Outcomes
and Letters of Support 2018-19**



DUDL Students attending Michelle Obama's Becoming Book Tour in December 2018

- For the last ten years nearly 100% of DUDL seniors have graduated on time. This is a radical improvement over our school and district averages. These students have received prestigious scholarships and attended such Universities as Yale, DU, Metro State, MIT, School of Mines, University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, the American University of Paris, Northwestern Law School and NYU Law School. With the help of debate scholarships, some have even debated in college for these schools.
- As reported by the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL) in 2017, over half of DUDL seniors enroll in college. NAUDL's Debate Track system shows that in 2017 67.62% of DUDL's Seniors enrolled in college. Of those DUDL students who enrolled in college, 29.39% enrolled at selective colleges and 18.5% enrolled at highly selective, elite, and Ivy plus institutions. Out of all the urban debate leagues in the country Denver has the highest college enrollment rate and we are outperforming our school district rates by 24 percentage points.

- According to Dr. Briana Mezuk's research of the Chicago urban debate program, African American male students, as urban debaters, are 70% more likely to graduate from high school, 50% more likely to reach the ACT college-readiness benchmark for English and 70% more likely to reach that benchmark for Reading. We also know that every student that participates in debate's literacy scores increase by 25%.
- Dr. Mezuk's continued research analyzed data from a cohort of 6,411 high school graduates from the Chicago Public School system, 26% of whom participated in the Chicago Debate League, from 1997 to 2007. She used logistic regression to estimate the relationship between debate participation and college matriculation, type of college attended, and college graduation, with "college-readiness," as indicated by performance on the ACT, examined as a mediating variable. Debaters were more likely to matriculate to college, particularly to four-year versus two-year institutions, than comparison students and these relationships were largely explained by debaters' better performance on the ACT.
- Based on 2018 student assessments, DUDL participants experience gains in practical skills, relationships, and aspirations for higher education. They are also experiencing a greater sense of self confidence and worth in their abilities to apply the skills they have learned while participating the Denver Urban Debate League. Participating in Urban Debate helps students plan for the future and explore paths they might not have otherwise. In 2017, 87% of DUDL participants surveyed expressed a desire to attend a four-year college, and 72% to attend graduate school.
- DUDL students are committed to their studies. The average GPA for an urban debater in Denver this year was 3.65 on a 4-point scale, in comparison to the national average GPA for low-income students at urban schools of 2.82*. Speech and debate fosters a love of learning in students that translates into other aspects of their lives.

*www.act.org/research-policy org, 2014

Letters of Support 2018-19

1. Brian Hayenga, Hinkley High School, Aurora Public Schools



Hinkley High School

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May 17, 2019

Brian Hayenga

Hinkley High School
1250 Chamber Road, Aurora CO 80011

RE: Letter of Support for the Denver Urban Debate League

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the Denver Urban Debate League (DUDL) on behalf of Hinkley HS. I have been a Speech and Debate Coach for over 20 years as a member of the National Forensics League and the Denver Urban Debate League. As the Hinkley coach, I have seen the profound influence this activity has had on my students. DUDL's program builds valuable academic and life skills that enable students to become engaged learners, critical thinkers, and active citizens who are advocates for themselves and their communities. Hinkley has worked with the Denver Urban Debate for five years and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership in the future.

The benefits of competitive speech and debate are numerous, including increased test scores, improved public speaking and critical thinking skills, better attendance rates, fewer disciplinary actions, higher graduation and college enrollment rates, and boosted social and emotional intelligence. The competitive structure motivates students who might not be excelling in a traditional classroom setting and gives these students the tools to engage in meaningful civil discourse. Students have the opportunity to hone their skills by practicing and competing in a variety of events, including Policy Debate, Student Congress, Big Questions Debate, Original Oratory, Impromptu, Drama, and Slam Poetry. My team captains the past two years have earned both the Boettcher Scholarship and the Daniels Scholarship. In their acceptance speeches, they credited DUDL as being a primary factor in them being able to earn this honor through the skills they learned in practice and through competition in the variety of events.

Our partnership with the Denver Urban Debate League allows us to offer these life-changing programs to an unlimited number of students at our school at no cost to their families. The Hinkley team ranges in size from 5 to 25 at competitions. Our team consists of second language learners, immigrants, refugees, and economically disadvantaged students. These kids could not participate in this outstanding educational opportunity without the support DUDL provides. DUDL partners with Aurora Public Schools to provide a coaching stipend and provides transportation and all meals to the participants free of charge for the tournaments and clinics. One of my students once told me that she attended every DUDL event because she knew that might be the only hot meals she got during the weekend. Of the many non-profit organizations I have worked with as an urban educator, the Denver Urban Debate League tops the list as an outstanding organization. I hope you will consider supporting this organization.

Sincerely,

Brian Hayenga
Hinkley HS
Speech & Debate Coach

2. Rachel Bruce, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Early College, Denver Public Schools



Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr.
EARLY COLLEGE

May 30, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

As the debate coach for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College (MLK), I am writing to commend the **Denver Urban Debate League** as a truly transformative organization that makes a difference in the lives of my students. Anything you can do to help further its mission will be resources wisely spent.

MLK has been a part of DUDL since its inception. Scores of our students have benefitted from the competition, the camaraderie, the support, the rigor, the fun, and the food; but mostly, they have been transformed by the opportunity and the forum to create and express their voice.

Several of MLK's debaters ended up debating in college at the University of Denver, the University of Wyoming, and Regis University. One has also graduated from law school and returned to serve on DUDL's board. Another is a DUDL staff member, one runs Tab, and still another teaches DUDL workshops. Nearly a dozen MLK debate alumni have helped judge at tournaments. My point is that they love the organization and love the community. Once a debater, always a debater.

Competitive policy debate is difficult. It demands high functioning in all four domains of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The debate topics are challenging—such as space exploration, immigration, education policy, poverty, alternative energy, and (next year) weapons sales. On top of the academic rigor, debate requires refined social-emotional skills, including receiving feedback, handling competitive defeats, partnering, building endurance, managing their time, relating to competitors, learning to network, and staying organized.

When you add all this up, you can understand why it is so important for students who may come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds to be given the opportunity to sharpen their minds in this kind of crucible. I receive emails all the time from my students in college, telling me things like:

- "My history class was so easy! After four years of debate, I was able to write my thesis in no time at all."
- "I'm giving tours for the Admissions Office. I did have to learn to walk backwards, though."
- "My professor picked me to present the alternative view to the class. She knew I'd be able to pull it off."

As a teacher, I am fortunate that DUDL provides me with **all the support I need** to give my students the opportunity to participate in a supportive community that fosters academic rigor. As I push them toward success, DUDL helps pull them in. DUDL removes all the obstacles in their way. Registration fees, trophies, judging, transportation, meals, evidence, instruction, etc. are all provided. Every element is necessary, and the organization needs **your** support to make debate happen for my deserving students. Please contact me if you require more information.

Sincerely,

Rachel R. Bruce
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Debate Coach, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College
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3. Leigh Kiser, Mapleton Public Schools



June 3, 2019

Mapleton Public Schools

7350 N. Broadway, Denver, CO 80221

RE: Letter of Support for the Denver Urban Debate League

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the Denver Urban Debate League (DUDL) on behalf of Mapleton Public Schools. As the speech and debate coach of Mapleton, I have witnessed first-hand the impact this program has had on our students. DUDL's programs build valuable academic and life skills that enable students to become engaged learners, critical thinkers, and active citizens who are advocates for themselves and their communities. Mapleton Public Schools has worked with the Denver Urban Debate for eight years and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership in the future.

The benefits of competitive speech and debate are numerous, including increased test scores, improved public speaking and critical thinking skills, better attendance rates, fewer disciplinary actions, higher graduation and college enrollment rates, and boosted social and emotional intelligence. I have watched students blossom from the benefits speech and debate has to offer. The competitive structure motivates students who might not be excelling in a traditional classroom setting and gives these students the tools to engage in meaningful civil discourse. The activity allows students to explore their own academic interests, while offering the ability to learn at their own pace. Students have the opportunity to hone their skills by practicing and competing in a variety of events, including Policy Debate, Student Congress, Big Questions Debate, Original Oratory, Impromptu, Drama, and Slam Poetry.

Our partnership with the Denver Urban Debate League allows us to offer these life-changing programs to an unlimited number of students at our school at no cost to their families. Here at Mapleton Public Schools, we average more than 20 students that participate in the Denver Urban Debate League. The DUDL lends full-time support to our coaching staff. The DUDL provides meals to our students and arranges safe transportation to events. Without this support it would be very hard to offer this enriching activity to our students. Additionally, the DUDL fosters a unique student-centered community where education is prioritized over competition and students from different schools and districts come together to support each other. Of the many non-profit organizations I have worked with as an urban educator, the Denver Urban Debate League tops the list as an outstanding organization.

Sincerely,

Leigh Kiser