



**National Association of  
School Superintendents**  
United in Common Purpose: Each Other's Success

## **Name**

**Dr. Alex Marrero, Superintendent  
Denver Public Schools  
Denver, Colorado**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Education & Experience**

Dr. Alex Marrero is an award-winning educational leader with a distinguished career dedicated to transforming urban education. As the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools (DPS) since 2021, he leads Colorado's largest school district, serving nearly 90,000 students and 15,000 employees across over 200 schools with an annual budget of \$1.5 billion.

Dr. Marrero's journey in education began in New York, where he served as an educator before becoming Superintendent. His deep commitment to equity, innovation, and student success has guided his leadership across multiple roles.

He holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, and he serves as an adjunct professor at Boston University, Manhattan College, and St. Peter's University, preparing future education leaders.

### **Areas of Expertise & Outstanding Achievements**

- Strategic District Leadership – Creator of the DPS Strategic Roadmap, a transformative framework focused on student success, adult capacity building, and systemwide improvement
- Equity & Inclusion – Established Black Student Success (BSS) and Latinx Student Success (LSS) Teams to close achievement gaps
- Governance & Stability – Led organizational restructuring ensuring effective leadership alignment
- Data Driven Decision Making – Launched Data MINE (Monitoring Improvement, Navigating Excellence) to enhance school performance accountability

- Bilingual & Multilingual Education – Expanded Seal of Biliteracy and founded International Educators' Institute to recruit and support multilingual educators
- Community Engagement & Public Trust – Developed Community Hubs, providing wraparound support for migrant families, food pantries, and English classes
- School Safety & Crisis Management – Spearheaded DPS's Long-term Operational Safety Plan in response to national school safety concerns
- Sustainability Leadership – Led the first ever Climate Action Policy for DPS, earning national recognition for environmental justice in education

## **AN INTERVIEW**

### **Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.**

The role of a superintendent today is more complex than ever—it requires a visionary mindset, political acumen, and a relentless commitment to student success. Superintendents must balance

academic excellence, operational efficiency, and community engagement while navigating national challenges like declining enrollment, mental health crises, and educational equity gaps.

I see today's superintendent as a connector, a problem solver, and an advocate. Our work extends beyond classrooms and into public policy, crisis management, and community development. It is not enough to set a vision—we must lead with integrity, cultivate trust, and relentlessly pursue equity for all students.

### **What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?**

During my years as Superintendent of DPS, I've learned that resilience and adaptability are nonnegotiable.

Trust is the foundation of change. Without community trust and stakeholder buy-in, even the best strategic plans will falter. The Listening and Learning Tour was crucial in building relationships and aligning our vision with community needs.

Urban education requires bold action. From establishing safety measures to tackling the migrant crisis, leadership in a diverse urban district requires swift decision-making, advocacy, and innovative partnerships.

Equity must be intentional. We cannot assume that good intentions alone will close

achievement gaps. We must target resources strategically, empower diverse voices, and measure impact—as seen in our success with the Black Student Success and Latinx Student Success initiatives.

Superintendents must be present at every table. Whether it's climate action at the White House, national discussions on safety and homeland security, or leading international educator recruitment efforts, superintendents must engage at all levels to ensure districts thrive

## **Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.**

A new superintendent must understand that change is a process, not an event—and this is where Carver's Change Theory provides a valuable roadmap.

### **◆ Phase 1: Creating a Need for Change (Listening & Learning)**

In Carver's framework, successful change begins by identifying a compelling reason for transformation. This requires a deep diagnosis of the system, listening to students, families, staff, and community stakeholders before making sweeping decisions.

**Application:** My Listening & Learning Tour helped shape the DPS Strategic Roadmap, ensuring that every initiative aligned with the real needs of the community.

### **◆ Phase 2: Developing a Shared Vision & Aligning Support**

Change is only effective when leaders inspire action through a unified vision. Carver emphasizes the importance of stakeholder alignment to reduce resistance.

**Application:** I implemented Collaborative Structures—where school leaders co-create solutions rather than having top-down mandates. This approach has been critical in principal engagement and district-wide cohesion.

### **◆ Phase 3: Institutionalizing Change with Systems & Policies**

Sustainable change requires policy alignment and systemic reinforcement. Organizational structures must support new behaviors for change to stick.

**Application:** My team launched Data MINE to embed accountability measures into our instructional improvement strategies, ensuring that progress is measured, reviewed, and refined at every level.

### **◆ Phase 4: Continuous Feedback & Reinforcement**

No change effort is complete without ongoing evaluation and adaptation. Carver's theory emphasizes that leaders must listen to feedback, adjust, and reinforce positive behaviors.

**Application:** My Principal Quarterly Meetings and Instructional Rounds ensure that leaders have a structured platform to assess progress and refine strategies.

By anchoring change in these four key phases, new superintendents can lead with confidence, avoid common pitfalls, and drive sustainable transformation.

## **Recognition & Awards**

-  2024 Superintendent of the Year – District Administration Leadership Institute
-  2024 Colorado Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents Superintendent of the Year
-  2023 Council of Great City Schools, Green Garner Urban Educator of the Year Finalist
-  2024 Top 100 Influencers in Education – District Administration
-  2023 Five Superintendents to Watch – K12 Dive
-  2022 National School Public Relations Association Superintendent to Watch

## **National Leadership Roles**

-  President, Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents
-  Executive Board Member, Council of the Great City Schools
-  Chair, CGCS Taskforce on Black and Latino Young Men & Boys
-  Homeland Security Academic Partnership Council Member
-  Business Experiential Learning Commission Appointee (Colorado Governor's Office)

## **Publications**

-  Ask My Amigos (2024) – A children's book celebrating Latino and Hispanic leaders
-  Latinx Radiance: Recipes for Leadership (2024)
-  In the Crosshairs: Navigating Political Pressures as a New Leader (2024)
-  The Low on Latinx Leadership – The New York Academy of Public Education Research Journal (2019)