

## DPS could teach Jeffco a lesson on charter schools

By The Denver Post Editorial Board

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*Students at the Denver School of Science and Technology, a DPS charter school, work out a physics problem on the board in their ninth-grade physics class.*

A stark difference has developed on how the two biggest school districts in Colorado respond to charter schools.

On one side is Denver Public Schools, which has 50 charter schools and just approved 12 more. On the other side is Jefferson County, with only 16 charters and a festering controversy over a plan to provide them more funding.

One would think this brouhaha over charters would be over.

DPS has found success establishing high-performing charters as an option for struggling populations.

Meanwhile, Jeffco's board is being criticized for its budget that — if approved on Thursday — would pledge \$3.7 million for charters from the district's voter-approved mill levy override.

It's about time. Jeffco charter schools until this point have received little of that money — which is patently unfair. Charters are public schools. Students should get the same taxpayer support as those attending district-run schools.

Denver figured that out years ago, providing equal operating funds for charters in its budget.

It's still not perfect. Denver must work on finding locations for charters after they have been approved.

Nevertheless, in Denver today, approving charters is standard procedure. Susana Cordova, chief academic officer for DPS, said the discussion now is about the quality of the schools, not their governance.

Instead of fighting about charters or their funding, Jeffco should look at Denver and how the district places charters with targeted programs in areas with low-performing schools.

Several struggling Jeffco schools are located near Denver's border, serving the same populations. But on one side of the border, Denver students are given a choice of high-performing charter schools with targeted programs. On the other, Jeffco students are left with failing neighborhood schools.

The fight in Jeffco should be over how to help those kids, not over stopping charters from getting their rightful share of the pie.