

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER SIX

Littleton, Colorado BOARD OF EDUCATION Minutes of Regular Meeting September 10, 2009

Call to Order

Vice-President Renee Howell called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Education Services Center, 5776 South Crocker Street.

Present

Renée Howell, Vice President
Sue Chandler, Secretary
Mary Nichols, Assistant Secretary

Absent

Bob Colwell, President
Lucie Stanish, Treasurer

Others in Attendance

Connie Bouwman, Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services
Lucinda Hundley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services
Kirk Madsen, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Scott Murphy, Superintendent
Mike Owens, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Howell asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the August 27, 2009, regular Board meeting. On page 1, Ms. Nichols corrected the first sentence of the first paragraph under Board Reports/Request to read, "...Gifted and Talented *Executive* Council meeting." On page 2, Ms. Howell corrected the second sentence of the second paragraph to read, "She attended a Colorado *STEM Network* (CSN) government relations meeting, and a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Business and Education *Coalition* (STEM-EC) meeting."

MOTION: Ms. Chandler moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the August 27, 2009, regular Board meeting as corrected. SECOND: Ms. Nichols. AYE: Chandler, Howell, Nichols. MOTION CARRIED: 3-0.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Murphy said the first K-12 District Instructional Leadership meeting was held this morning. He spoke to the group about the state and national financial situation and its effect on LPS. He will be talking to all district advisory committees and to school accountability committees to gather their input and guidance, and determine their values.

Mr. Murphy was a guest, along with Cherry Creek School District superintendent Mary Chesley, on the Greenwood Village mayor's show. The segment will air the first week in October.

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Mr. Murphy reported that the district's Inspired Writing project is getting a lot of attention across the country. School and district staff members were interviewed by two national education magazines: *Edweek Magazine* and *District Administrator Magazine*. He also shared copies of an article about LPS in *Out of Denver*, a new south Denver magazine. Mr. Murphy commented that many community members were engaged in the conversation about President Obama's speech to students on Tuesday.

Board Reports/Requests

Ms. Nichols attended a Colorado School Finance Project meeting and a Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) Region 5 meeting.

Ms. Chandler attended the CASB Region 5 meeting. She said LPS Board members nominated Ms. Howell for the CASB McGuffey award, which honors board members who bring both the head and the heart of committed and passionate service to their work as a board member. The award was presented to Ms. Howell at the meeting. Ms. Chandler read the accolades from the award certificate.

Ms. Howell expressed thanks to her fellow Board members and to LPS staff members for the McGuffey award honor, noting it is a team effort.

Citizens' Requests to Speak to the Board

Mr. Sam Drury spoke about public visibility of student academic achievement progress with a focus on professional learning communities and the universal literacy framework.

Mr. Jack Randall complimented the Heritage High School band members for their exemplary conduct during the high school band performances at the Colorado State Fair.

Action

Consent Agenda

Ms. Howell asked if there was any additional information about personnel recommendations on the consent agenda. Mr. Mike Owens, assistant superintendent of human resources, said there is a .5 science teacher vacancy at Heritage High School, which is a result of the additional staff needed to handle the enrollment increase. All other classroom teaching positions are filled. Ms. Chandler asked if the number of employees who have been rehired is higher than the typical number. Mr. Owens responded that it may be up slightly. Ms. Howell commented about the new track coach at Pathways and asked if this is a new position at Pathways. Mr. Owens responded that Pathways has had a track coach for several years in response to student interest.

MOTION: Ms. Nichols moved that the Board of Education approve the recommended consent agenda numbered 1.1 concerning Personnel Recommendations with the additions made this evening. SECOND: Ms. Chandler. AYE: Chandler, Howell, Nichols. MOTION CARRIED: 3-0.

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Discussion

Gifted and Talented (G/T) Advisory Council Annual Report and 2009-2010 Charges

Ms. Lucinda Hundley, assistant superintendent of student support services, stated that the Board received an updated membership list this evening. She introduced Melinda Ness, coordinator of gifted and talented education. Ms. Ness explained that in spite of limited resources, LPS works hard to support G/T students' needs. Ms. Ness thanked Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) members for their dedication and introduced Joni Lieb, outgoing Council chairperson. Shauna Gilmore is the new chair for 2009–2010.

Ms. Lieb reviewed the 2008–2009 charges and highlighted some of the information presented and some of the findings of the Council. She explained that the Council recommends only two charges for 2009–2010 in order to maximize the time and attention of the group. Ms. Lieb said that fewer charges would give members an opportunity to conduct a more in-depth study of the two areas selected.

Ms. Nichols asked Ms. Lieb to expand on the book study the Council has planned. Ms. Lieb responded that in order to complete the charge, “research and define what gifted underachievement looks like” members will study the book *When Gifted Students Underachieve...What You Can Do About It* by Sylvia Rimm. Ms. Nichols thanked Ms. Lieb for her leadership and expressed gratitude for parents like Ms. Lieb.

Ms. Chandler commented that she was pleased to see that the two proposed charges are tied to research. Ms. Lieb commented that much of the information that is typically shared with GTAC members will still occur. Ms. Howell asked if the book covers underachievement in general or G/T specifically. Ms. Ness said the book is specific to G/T students.

Ms. Howell thanked Ms. Lieb and GTAC members for their dedication to gifted and talented education in LPS. The charge and membership will return for action on September 24.

Student Achievement Index: On or Above Grade Level

Ms. Connie Bouwman, assistant superintendent of learning services, stated that the student achievement index is in its second year of implementation. She explained that the index is intended to be a dynamic process that changes as additional data become available. She introduced Ms. Patti Turner, assessment coordinator.

Ms. Turner remarked that it is exciting to be part of the project to measure student progress. She thanked the learning services and IT departments for their involvement. Ms. Turner reviewed the language arts, math, and science data points that comprise the student achievement index, and described the calculation methodology. She reviewed the percentage of students on or above grade level based on spring 2009 assessment data, which indicate that 79.6 percent of LPS students are at this point. This percentage is up 2.2 percent from 2008. Ms. Turner reviewed the factors that caused the changes. Negative changes were noted in kindergarten through third grade, which was a result of the change to the DRA2 reading assessment in compliance with the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA). Ms. Turner

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stated that positive changes are expected at these grades in 2010. Another area of change noted was middle school math gains. Based on projected increases, Ms. Turner stated that administration believes the district's 90 percent goal is attainable.

Ms. Turner explained that next steps for the student achievement index include adding data points for embedded writing assessments at the elementary level, continuing to implement and monitor professional learning communities (PLC) and tracking and reporting student progress (TRSP) recommendations, and continuing to refine the school improvement process and the pyramid of intervention model.

Ms. Turner reviewed the district's AssessTrack model that brings all student achievement data together and provides a user-friendly tool for teachers and administrators to use in discussions of student achievement.

Ms. Nichols asked if there would be a time in the future when no additional data points would be added to the index. Ms. Turner responded that the index may continue to evolve as administration continues to learn more about measuring student achievement. She also noted that the Colorado Student Achievement Program (CSAP) will change because of the new state standards. Ms. Bouwman added that administration knew when the project began that it would be a dynamic process. She added that the district continues to improve its view of student achievement. Ms. Nichols commented that the process shows great thinking and striving for improvement. She said she appreciated the clarification about the assessment change in kindergarten through third grade for CBLA compliance and its effect on the data.

Ms. Chandler said it is good to hear administration speak confidently about the body of evidence in the student achievement index. She asked about the drop in ninth grade math scores. Ms. Bouwman responded that this will be reviewed during the math update scheduled for September 24. Ms. Chandler asked about a student connection related to the index. Ms. Turner said there is an individual student report available in AssessTrack, and teachers can use this report for individual goal setting with students.

Ms. Howell asked Ms. Turner to elaborate on how teachers use AssessTrack. Ms. Turner responded that it formally launched at the beginning of the current school year and teachers used it during the first PLC late-start day. She said teachers appreciate the availability of student achievement data in one place. Ms. Howell asked how AssessTrack compares to the Colorado Growth Model, and Ms. Turner responded that AssessTrack includes the student growth percentile from the Growth Model.

Ms. Chandler asked if administration has what is needed to continue to make progress in the use of AssessTrack. Ms. Bouwman responded that the written instructions are very clear and it is a very intuitive system.

Mr. Murphy said that he received a detailed presentation about AssessTrack and noted that administration can look at the district at various levels, down to the student level, and determine what strategies can help students improve, which is critical to continued progress. He asked if there is an issue of grade inflation by

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teachers, and Ms. Turner responded that classroom grades are closely aligned with other assessments. Mr. Murphy also commented about the high value teachers place on instructional coaches.

Ms. Howell thanked administration for their excellent work and asked that this appreciation be conveyed to teachers.

Preliminary Enrollment Update

Mr. Scott Myers, chief financial officer, provided information about 2009–2010 preliminary enrollment based on counts taken September 1, 2009. He noted this is not the official student count report. The official count period is September 24 through October 8, 2009. He said that elementary enrollment is generally flat, although Centennial, Twain, and Wilder reported increases. Middle school enrollment is ahead of projections, with the greatest increase at sixth grade. High school enrollment is also greater than projections, with Heritage High School gaining the most students. Overall, enrollment is up over projections by 226 students, which is a significant increase over the past several years. The preliminary full-time equivalent (FTE) count is 67 FTE higher than October 2008, but with enrollment averaging, funding will be based on a lower student count.

Ms. Jean Martinez, director of elementary education, reviewed the transfer of students from Ames and Whitman elementary schools to other district schools. She said that most students are attending the designated receiving schools, which are Franklin and Peabody for Ames students, and Highland, Moody, and Runyon for Whitman students. In addition to the receiving schools, Twain's enrollment is up because of special education programs that moved to Twain. A total of 55 students did not return to the district; of those, 28 students moved out of the area and some returned to home schools in Douglas County.

Ms. Howell commented that other districts are also seeing a bit of growth in student enrollment and ask how the state handles these increases from a funding perspective. Mr. Myers said the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is watching this carefully through the preliminary enrollment reports.

Ms. Chandler thanked the transition team that has helped provide a positive transition for Ames and Whitman students. Mr. Murphy complimented the transition team and principals for their work with the families that were affected by the school closures.

Enhancing Education Through Technology (ETT) Competitive Grant Partnership with Sheridan School District

Mr. Dan Maas, chief information officer, reviewed a grant proposal in the amount of \$195,000 that will be submitted to the Colorado Department of Education in partnership with Sheridan School District. This competitive grant proposal is titled "Powering Up Eighth Grade Writers" and funding would be through federal Title IID, which is funded in part through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Mr. Maas noted that LPS would not be eligible to receive these funds without the partnership with Sheridan. The same was true of the "Powering Up Writing" grant received in partnership with Englewood Public Schools. Mr. Maas reviewed first year CSAP writing results following the Powering Up Writing grant

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implementation and noted positive improvement. The new grant will enable LPS to expand the Inspired Writing initiative to eighth grade, in addition to the current initiative at fifth, sixth, and ninth grades.

Ms. Mollie McDonald, director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; Mr. Mark Lindstone, Assistant Director, Information and Technology Services; and Mr. Mike Porter, Assistant Director, Instructional Technology joined Mr. Maas to respond to questions from the Board.

Ms. Chandler said she appreciated that the project goal is focused on learning and not on the technology. She added that the first-year data is impressive. Ms. Nichols asked if Sheridan has the technical support capabilities to sustain this initiative over time. Mr. Porter responded that they are working to improve in-house technology support. She also asked if the partnership with Englewood is completed, and Mr. Maas responded that it was a one-year grant, but LPS will continue to sustain Inspired Writing.

Ms. Howell asked how the partnership with Sheridan began. Mr. Maas said it started with conversation between superintendents as well as the successful food services relationship. Mr. Lindstone added that Sheridan has contracted with LPS for IT services to help manage its technology infrastructure.

Ms. Howell asked about CSAP writing results at Moody Elementary School, and Ms. Bouwman explained that Moody implemented a new literacy series at the same time the Inspired Writing initiative began. She noted that results are often a reflection of the fidelity of implementing an initiative, and Moody staff members were more focused on implementing the new literacy series. Ms. Howell asked about the reactions of students and teachers who have received Netbooks. Mr. Porter responded that middle school students need a laptop and teachers are excited.

Ms. Nichols thanked staff members who are taking the initiative to pursue grant opportunities and collaborate with other districts on behalf of students. Ms. Chandler asked about the challenges associated with this initiative, and Mr. Maas responded that writing grant proposals is demanding work that requires extra effort from staff members. Ms. McDonald commented that teachers are receiving the most in-depth technology training they have ever had.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Update

Ms. Bouwman explained that the annual yearly progress (AYP) report is important information that helps administration make decisions about directing resources to those students most in need of academic support.

Ms. Turner reviewed the various elements of AYP, noting the district had 135 targets to meet in 2009; schools' targets ranged from 12 to 36. She explained that subgroups consist of 30 or more students and are aggregated by grade level spans. A student belongs to all applicable subgroups and could be counted in up to five subgroups. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires all schools and subgroups to attain 100 percent proficiency by 2014, and Colorado has established benchmarks that increase every few years. Benchmarks were raised in 2008, and will go up again in 2011.

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Ms. Turner explained that overall, LPS missed six targets, which is 96 percent, up from 91 percent in 2008. Missed targets were in the performance category, which is based on CSAP results, and occurred at all levels. All elementary schools made all AYP targets, four middle schools made AYP, including both charter schools, and none of the high schools made AYP.

Ms. Turner said that LPS is a Title I district because we accept federal funds. The state is required to place districts on program improvement that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years, and take corrective action if a district continues to fail to make AYP. The corrective action for LPS is the requirement to set aside some federal funds for professional development. Ms. Turner noted that LPS will be on year four of program improvement, and other large metro area districts have also been on program improvement for several years. She said as long as the law remains unchanged, LPS will likely remain on program improvement.

Ms. Nichols asked if schools were required to prepare a program improvement plan, and Ms. Turner said only the district is on program improvement. Ms. Chandler asked if LPS is at risk of losing federal funds. Ms. Turner responded that loss of funding is not part of the state's NCLB plan. The sanction is that districts must use some of these funds for professional development. Ms. Howell remarked that Littleton Academy and Littleton Preparatory charter schools have fewer targets for middle school grades than the other LPS middle schools. She asked if the number of targets were similar at all middle schools would the AYP results change. Ms. Turner said she has not analyzed that aspect, but speculated that it would make a positive difference in AYP outcome. Ms. Bouwman added that any time there are fewer targets to meet, it becomes easier to meet all targets. Ms. Chandler asked how the district addresses missed AYP targets in schools that make AYP. Ms. Bouwman responded that work is done with individual schools and with students who are underperforming.

Mr. Murphy stated that the district has work to do with its subgroup populations and that work requires resources. He said administration is committed to improve achievement for all students even though limited resources for some student populations create challenges. Ms. Hundley commented that students in subgroups create an adverse educational impact, which is why they are in a subgroup. She added that the district is working in a variety of ways to help students improve academic achievement.

Ms. Howell thanked administration for their work to improve student academic achievement.

Future Agenda/Adjournment

Mr. Murphy distributed a draft agenda for the September 24, 2009, Board meeting. Discussion items include District Accountability Committee (DAC) Year-End Report, 2009–2010 Proposed Charge, and At-Large Membership, and Math Implementation Update.

MOTION: Ms. Nichols moved that the Board of Education meeting adjourn.

SECOND: Ms. Chandler. AYE: Chandler, Howell, Nichols. MOTION CARRIED: 3-0.

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The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renée Howell
Vice President

Sue Chandler
Secretary

ks (10/2/09)