

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER SIX

Littleton, Colorado BOARD OF EDUCATION Minutes of Regular Meeting September 25, 2008

Call to Order

President Bob Colwell called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Education Services Center, 5776 South Crocker Street.

Present

Bob Colwell, President
Sue Chandler, Secretary
Renée Howell, Vice President
Lucie Stanish, Treasurer
Mary Nichols, Assistant Secretary

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

Mr. Colwell asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the September 11, 2008, regular Board meeting. There were none.

MOTION: Ms. Chandler moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the September 11, 2008, regular Board meeting as presented. SECOND: Ms. Stanish. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Murphy expressed his thanks to those involved in the Facility Use Task Force forum on Monday, September 22. He said the next Task Force meeting is on September 29.

Mr. Murphy said the district has been notified that LPS has six National Merit Semifinalists, 22 Commended Scholars, two Hispanic Scholars, and an Achievement Scholar. He also announced that Euclid Middle School teacher Jennifer Phillips is a finalist for the 2008 Colorado Presidential Award for Excellence in mathematics and science teaching. Mr. Murphy said Heritage High School hosted the 31st Liberty Bell Invitational Cross Country meet on September 12. Moody Elementary School hosted a fall carnival, and Highland Elementary School will celebrate its 50th birthday on Friday, September 26, with former principals in attendance.

Mr. Murphy asked Mr. Dan Maas, chief information officer, to comment on the recent school visit made by product managers from ASUS Corporation, manufacturers of the Eee laptop computers. Mr. Maas said that in addition to ASUS managers, Colorado Department of Education (CDE) representatives also joined the

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group for school visits to East Elementary, Powell and Newton middle schools, and Heritage High School, along with schools in Englewood that also received Eee laptops through the Writer's Workshop grant. Mr. Maas described some of the ways the laptops are being used by students that were observed during the visits. Mr. Maas said visitors were very impressed with what they saw, particularly considering that the project has just begun. In other technology news, Mr. Murphy complimented Mr. Maas for his article about how LPS is engaging students in 21st Century learning that was recently published online by the Hope Foundation.

Board Reports/Requests

Ms. Stanish attended the first meeting of the Special Services Advisory Committee and the Greenwood Village "State of the Village" luncheon. She also attended Heritage High School Homecoming events including the pep rally and parade. She attended the Littleton High School collage concert, which featured all performing arts and drama groups. Ms. Stanish attended the Facility Use Task Force forum on September 22.

Ms. Howell mentioned the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) School Leadership Academy that supports professional development for educators. She attended the first District Accountability Committee meeting and the Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) meeting. She said that two executives from ASUS, Jessie Lin and Michael Wang, attended the ETAC meeting, along with Chip Roepke, from Contact PC. All three were impressed with technology implementation in LPS. She commented that Heritage High School physics teacher Mike Rudolph was instructing several students in Center, Colorado using online technology, in conjunction with his regular physics class at Heritage. Ms. Howell further noted that the Heritage band director, Kevin Keena is using technology to help students learn field formations. Ms. Howell attended a Colorado Association of Schools Boards (CASB) board meeting and an Online Learning Advisory Board meeting. Ms. Howell also attended the Facility Use Task Force forum and commented that the community was very respectful. She said she appreciated the key communicators email about district meetings and activities.

Ms. Chandler attended the first Greater Littleton Youth Initiative meeting of the new school year, as well as the Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) Board meeting. She said the school's administrator, Jim McDermott will be leaving the position at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. Ms. Chandler provided a corrected date of October 2 for the Circle of Concern meeting where Mike Harris will be the presenter. Ms. Chandler commented on a leadership retreat she attended at her college alma mater where the college president stated the most important leadership skills are communication and writing. The president said school transition years, elementary to middle, and middle to high school, are critical in a student's education.

Ms. Nichols attended the Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council meeting. She watched part of the Liberty Bell Invitational cross country meet, and attended Heritage Homecoming activities. Ms. Nichols also attended the Greenwood Village "State of the Village" luncheon and noted that LPS was mentioned as an important part of Greenwood Village. She attended the Facility Use Task Force forum.

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Mr. Colwell attended the Facility Use Task Force forum, noting it was an excellent forum. He said the Task Force will report to the Board on October 23. In addition a workshop and a special Board meeting have been scheduled on October 27 and November 6 respectively to further discuss the findings of the Task Force.

Mr. Colwell commented about a recent personal trip to New York, noting that the elementary school he visited in Stanton Island is facing issues similar to schools in LPS.

Citizens' Requests to Speak to the Board

Sam Drury addressed the Board regarding public visibility of LPS student academic achievement progress, specifically school improvement plans.

Action

Consent Agenda

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 and 1.2 Gifted and Talented Advisory Council (GTAC) 2008–2009 Charge and Membership. SECOND: Ms. Howell. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Discussion

District Accountability Committee (DAC) Year-End Report and 2008–2009 Proposed Charge and Membership

Ms. Connie Bouwman, assistant superintendent of learning services, introduced Carrie Warren-Gully, and Kelly Perez, District Accountability Committee co-chairs. Ms. Warren-Gully provided an overview of the year-end report, highlighting several presentations including the opportunity to hear from Board of Education candidates, LPS principals' panel discussion, large-scale student assessment report, Legislative breakfast meeting, and the annual conversation with Board members and the superintendent. Ms. Perez reviewed the 2008–2009 proposed charge, noting that it remains essentially the same as last year's charge.

Ms. Chandler expressed appreciation for the inclusion of items that continue to be of high interest to DAC members. Ms. Warren-Gully noted that the topic of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) still comes up regularly. She further commented that student report cards and full-day kindergarten will be important topics this year.

Ms. Chandler asked if all schools had a representative and what percentage of the committee is new. Ms. Warren-Gully responded that nearly all schools had a DAC representative identified. Ms. Bouwman said about 50 percent of the committee is new this year. Ms. Howell thanked the DAC leadership and commented that getting meeting minutes out to the membership quickly was very helpful. She said DAC members are not afraid to ask hard questions. Ms. Nichols said that feedback from DAC is a good way to maintain a connection with the community. Mr. Colwell asked if PLCs was a discussion topic at DAC. Ms. Warren-Gully responded that the topic surfaced during several informal discussions. Ms. Chandler asked if the Board

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had a PLC update scheduled, and Ms. Bouwman respond nothing was scheduled at this time. Ms. Howell said that DAC members suggested that PLC work be discussed during parent-teacher conferences to provide more specific information to parents. Ms. Stanish thanked the DAC leadership and members. Mr. Murphy thanked Ms. Warren-Gully and Ms. Perez for their service to the district.

One citizen addressed the Board.

The 2008–2009 proposed charge and at-large membership will return for action on October 9.

Student Achievement Index: On or Above Grade Level Report

Ms. Bouwman stated that that the LPS student achievement goal was established two years ago based on the district's 2006 Strategic Plan and in response to the Board's emphasis on increased achievement for all students. Work then began to develop a way to measure progress toward the goal. The student achievement index was developed using results of student assessments, which include CSAP, MAP, the district's Grade 2 Writing assessment, Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) assessment, and report card grades for language arts and math. A baseline was established using data from the 2007–2008 school year.

After further consideration of the ways in which the index calculation can be made, it was determined that a more mathematically sound calculation should be used, and the 2007–2008 baseline was recalculated. The baseline changed from 78.5 percent of students in LPS who are on or above grade level, to 78.06 percent of students on or above grade level. Based on the student achievement index body of evidence available in spring 2008, 77.4 percent of LPS students are on or above grade level. The drop from the baseline of 78.06 percent is due to the change to a standards-based report card for kindergarten through fifth grade, which reduced grade inflation. Ms. Bouwman explained that this loss was expected and it is important for students to receive report card grades based on specific standards. She further noted that there is still some grade inflation in fourth and fifth grades.

According to the established goal, the district is committed to cutting the achievement gap, which is 12.6 percent, by one-half; therefore 6.3 percent more students must be on or above grade level by the end of the 2009–2010 school year to meet the achievement goal.

Ms. Bouwman reviewed next steps in the process to meet the goal: 1) Add data points, including the addition of MAP assessments for kindergarten through second grade; 2) Change CBLA assessment to DRA2; 3) Continue to implement recommendations from the Tracking and Reporting Student Progress Committee; and 4) Continue to refine the school improvement process, professional learning communities work, and the pyramid of intervention work.

Ms. Nichols asked if the new DRA2 assessment is more rigorous and focused, and the response was that it is. Ms. Mollie McDonald explained that the DRA2 is the state-required test for use in grades K–3. Ms. Chandler expressed thanks for administration's work in identifying and resolving issues related to the student achievement index and asked if administration believes the index is now an accurate measure of student achievement. Ms. Bouwman responded that progress is being

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made, and more data points, particularly in science, need to be added in the future. Ms. McDonald said the focus needs to be on how assessment data is used.

Ms. Stanish said she was pleased that assessment is done to identify students who are not at grade level and not done just for compliance. Ms. Howell said she appreciated that the district goal is a focus at K–12 leadership meetings. She thanked administration for providing clear information about the factors that impacted the current student achievement index calculation. Ms. Chandler asked about students' attitude toward assessments. Ms. Bouwman responded that students enjoy tracking their progress toward goals. She said she believes that overall students want to do well on assessments and that it is important to make assessments meaningful.

Mr. Colwell remarked that he understands the need for changes as this is a dynamic process. He said the Board fully supports the district goal.

Mr. Murphy asked what the Board could do to help reach the 90 percent goal.

Ms. Bouwman responded that it is important for the Board to maintain its focus on increased student achievement. She said overall, LPS student achievement results are very good for most students, but not for all students. It is therefore important to focus on equity and excellence for all students.

Mr. Colwell thanked administration for their work and their focus on the student achievement goal.

One citizen addressed the Board.

Adequate yearly Progress (AYP) Update

Ms. Patti Turner, assessment coordinator, provided background information on Adequate Yearly Progress, explaining that it is the measure used in the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, that tracks progress toward targets. CSAP is the assessment measure for all Colorado schools. She further noted that Colorado is trying to better align school accountability systems within the state. Ms. Turner said LPS had 143 targets to meet out of a possible 153, noting that the larger and more diverse a district or school is, the more targets it has to meet. For the 2007–2008 school year, LPS made 128 of its targets, or 91 percent. All schools made all AYP participation and “other indicator” targets. She noted that 69 percent of LPS schools made AYP performance targets, compared to 92 percent in 2006–2007, and explained that the performance level benchmarks rose in 2008.

Ms. Turner explained the district's historic target performance and noted areas where some gains have been made as well as areas needing further analysis and attention. In reviewing school summary information, Ms. Turner said at the elementary level two schools did not make all AYP performance targets, but missed by very small margins. At the high school level, Ms. Turner said that Heritage met all AYP targets. She explained that LPS schools were making progress toward AYP performance targets when they were steady, but the higher benchmark in 2008 caused a drop in performance relative to the targets.

Ms. Turner reviewed sanctions associated with not making AYP, stating that in Colorado this results in withholding or redirecting federal consolidated grant funds. She also reviewed corrective action, which includes a letter to all district parents and a program improvement plan that includes specific goals for subgroups not making AYP.

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Mr. Colwell asked if the performance level benchmarks will remain the same even though the NCLB Act was not reauthorized. Ms. Turner responded that the benchmarks will remain at current levels until the law is reauthorized. Ms. Howell asked if other metro districts experienced the same drop in performance. Ms. Turner responded that the data has not been made public, and she will provide the Board with comparison data as soon as it is available.

Ms. Chandler asked if there are identifiable reasons why Heritage made AYP this year. Ms. Bouwman responded that Mr. Ken Moritz, Heritage principal, will be sharing information with the Board during its student achievement workshop on October 9. Ms. Chandler also asked if all states have the same AYP measures, and Ms. Turner responded that each state determines how AYP is measured and there are a number of variables.

Ms. Chandler asked if states or districts have a way to communicate these inconsistencies. Ms. Turner said there is awareness of the variables among states, and there is discussion about how the variations can be addressed in the reauthorization. Ms. Bouwman commented that NCLB was a bipartisan bill with the intent of illuminating student subgroups that were not achieving, and NCLB has accomplished this purpose.

Ms. Howell asked if there is concern in the community about AYP, especially for parents coming into a public school system for the first time. Ms. McDonald responded that her department looks for the common threads identified by the various accountability measures, and that commonality is the identification of the learning needs of individual students, which then must be addressed. Ms. McDonald also said she believe the community has some understanding about the inconsistencies among the accountability measures in Colorado.

Ms. Nichols thanked administration for the detailed information and showing the successes in LPS schools, along with the fact that a few students can make a significant difference in whether targets are achieved.

Mr. Colwell asked if the performance target benchmarks are set by the state, and the response was yes. Ms. Turner further explained that benchmarks differ state to state except that all states have a target of 100 percent proficiency by 2014. Mr. Colwell asked if there was any comparable information between states, and Ms. Turner responded that comparisons are nearly impossible because of the variations among measures. However, it is typically the same subgroups of students that fail to meet proficiency targets across the nation.

Mr. Colwell thanked administration for their diligence in analyzing the data. He commented that it is frustrating that the progress we are making cannot be reported as such. He also said it speaks volumes that while the economically disadvantaged student population is growing, no LPS elementary schools missed targets in this subgroup. He expressed appreciation for the effort elementary teachers are giving to accomplish this.

One citizen addressed the Board.

Board Policy BIBA—Board Member Training and Continuing Education

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Mr. Murphy presented a new Board policy, BIBA, Board Member Training and Continuing Education: Conferences, Conventions, Workshops, stating that this is a priority of the Board as well as the district. Ms. Howell said the impetus for the policy was the workshop last spring with Randy Black.

Mr. Colwell requested the following changes: In the third paragraph, second sentence, change to read, “expand *the Board’s* knowledge ... and to deepen *Board members’* insights” In the list in the fourth paragraph, number one, delete the parentheses and change the word “example” to “*including such topics as: ...*.” In the fourth paragraph, number three, change to read, “*Publications and subscriptions to ...*.”

Ms. Chandler asked if there are funds budgeted for Board member training and attendance at workshops and whether funding should be mentioned in the policy. Mr. Murphy responded that the district routinely budgets for Board training. He suggested that this is implied in the policy and cautioned against too much specificity in the policy. Mr. Colwell commented that the policy outlines what Board members can do in the area of training, and is not intended to include financial information.

Ms. Howell remarked that this is an important policy that shows the public that training is a value, and it is important for Board members to continually learn about their role. Ms. Chandler said she has benefitted from the training she has received as a Board member.

Mr. Colwell said the policy will return for action on October 9 with the modifications noted this evening.

Future Agenda/Adjournment

Mr. Murphy distributed a draft agenda for the October 9, 2008, Board meeting. Action items include District Accountability Committee (DAC) 2008–2009 Proposed Charge and Membership, Board Policy BIBA—Board Member Training and Continuing Education, Multiple Copy Literature List, and Board Policy JEB—Entrance Age Requirements. Discussion items include Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) 2007–2008 Year-End Report and 2008–2009 Charge and Membership, Special Services Advisory Committee (SSAC) 2007–2008 Year-End Report and 2008–2009 Charge and Membership, and Assessment: Longitudinal Growth Model.

Ms. Howell requested an additional discussion item concerning a Board resolution on Proposed Amendment 59.

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

SECOND: Ms. Nichols. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish.

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Colwell
President

Sue Chandler
Secretary

ks (10/10/08)