

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

ARAPAHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER SIX

Littleton, Colorado BOARD OF EDUCATION Minutes of Regular Meeting

December 11, 2008

Call to Order

President Bob Colwell called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 November 6, 2008, special Board meeting. There were none.

MOTION: Ms. Howell moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the November 6, 2008, special Board meeting as presented. SECOND: Ms. Nichols. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Mr. Colwell asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the November 13, 2008, regular Board meeting. On page 2, fourth paragraph, Ms. Stanish corrected the council title to read, *PTO Presidents Council*. On page 10, second paragraph, Ms. Howell clarified the first sentence to read, "...about \$1,000 less per student than *the national average*."

MOTION: Ms. Stanish moved that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the November 13, 2008, regular Board meeting as corrected. SECOND: Ms. Howell. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Murphy reported that Jarrad Aguirre, a 2005 Arapahoe High School graduate is one of 32 Americans to be selected as a Rhodes Scholar. He announced that Heritage High School has donated soccer uniforms and balls to students in southern Sudan. Mr. Murphy said 17 Littleton High School Future Business Leaders of America

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(FBLA) club students participated in the recent Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge.

Mr. Murphy announced that the Arapahoe varsity cheers were runners-up at the 2008 Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) Spirit competition, and the AHS varsity toms placed sixth in the state. The Arapahoe band placed first at the Parade of Lights, and AHS students collected about \$1,300 for Toys for Tots and collected food items for the Broncos Wives annual food drive.

Mr. Murphy congratulated the Heritage girls' soccer team for receiving the 2008 National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) academic award for its cumulative team grade point average of 3.34. The Heritage select choir was featured live on radio station KEZW AM 1430.

Mr. Murphy said that LPS recently received an \$83,000 grant to provide Smartboard tool kits for 17 classrooms at East Elementary, Powell Middle, and Arapahoe High schools. He congratulated Melinda Ness, LPS coordinator of gifted and talented education, and Stacey Stagner, Whitman Elementary School gifted/talented teacher for their presentation at the National Association for Gifted Children convention.

Mr. Murphy recognized Kanoe Cockett, LPS director of transportation, for receiving the Leadership Award from *School Transportation News* magazine at the National Association of Pupil Transportation conference. Ms. Cockett will be featured in an article in the February edition of the magazine.

Board Reports/Requests

Ms. Stanish attended the Special Services Advisory Committee (SSAC) meeting and an SSAC parent panel presentation at the special education department chairs meeting. Ms. Stanish attended an LPS Foundation board meeting. She noted that the Foundation shared a booth with the South Metro Chamber of Commerce at a recent expo, and the Foundation Spirit Dinner is being planned. Ms. Stanish attended the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) annual convention. She attended an LHS choir concert, the PTO Presidents Council (PPC) holiday party, and the district-sponsored breakfast meeting with state Legislators.

Ms. Howell attended the CASB Convention, the PPC holiday party, and the Legislative breakfast. She commented about the engagement of the District Accountability Committee (DAC) during their school improvement plan review process. Ms. Howell also attended the Arapahoe winter choir concert. Ms. Howell complimented Diane Leiker, director of communications, for the new LPS banner at the CASB Convention.

Ms. Chandler attended two Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) meetings. She said the City of Littleton has renewed the funding for the Greater Littleton Youth Initiative (GLYI), which supports some district programs. The next GLYI meeting is January 9. Ms. Chandler also attended the PPC holiday gathering. She said she has recently joined a national committee through the National School Boards Association (NSBA) that is focusing on student health issues.

Ms. Nichols attended an Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council meeting. She also attended an Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC) meeting in

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place of Ms. Howell. Ms. Nichols attended the CASB annual convention and the PPC holiday social.

Mr. Colwell attended the CASB convention and said LPS once again had student art work on display at the student art show sponsored by CASB. He attended boys and girls basketball games between Arapahoe and Heritage. Mr. Colwell attended the Legislative breakfast and the PPC holiday gathering.

Citizens' Requests to Speak to the Board

Sam Drury spoke on public visibility of LPS student academic achievement progress, specifically adequate yearly progress performance and the release of the state School Accountability Reports.

Action

Consent Agenda

Mr. Mike Owens, assistant superintendent of human resources explained that Kanoe Cockett, director of transportation, appears in the personnel recommendations as a rehire. Given the transportation challenges associated with school consolidation, Ms. Cockett has made the decision to delay her previously planned retirement. Mr. Owens noted that a new director of secondary education is also part of the personnel recommendations. Ms. Connie Bouwman, assistant superintendent of learning services, introduced Dr. Amy Oaks, currently principal at Goddard Middle School, as the new secondary education director.

MOTION: Ms. Chandler 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. Stanish. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Adoption of Mill Levy and Tax Revenues Certification

Mr. Scott Myers, chief financial officer, presented information concerning the legally required Board action to certify the tax revenues and mill levies to the Board of County Commissioners by December 15 per Colorado Revised Statute 22-20-102. He stated that the total district mill levy for 2009 tax collections is 46.650 mills, with the general fund levy at 38.631 mills, and the bond mill levy at 8.019 mills.

Mr. Myers noted that the district's assessed valuation increased approximately \$23 million, which is about 1.8 percent, to \$1,301,422,260. The general fund levy decreased 0.066 mills, and the bond redemption fund decreased 0.075 mills.

Mr. Myers explained that the statutory levy remains frozen at 25.353 mills, based on Senate Bill 07-199 and a recent Colorado Supreme Court order that continues the freeze for the next year. Mr. Myers said that 2008-2009 residential taxes are \$928 on a \$250,000 home, which is down from \$931 in 2007-2008.

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Based on the district's total program funding and certified assessed valuation, administration recommended that the Board certify the 2009 mill levies and tax revenues to be collected as stated below.

	Mill Levies	Tax Revenues
General Fund		
Public School Finance Act Levy	25.353	\$32,994,658
Overrides:		
Hold Harmless Override	1.779	2,315,347
Abated and Refunded Taxes	0.359	467,004
1988 Override Election	2.303	2,998,234
1997 Override Election	3.842	5,000,000
2004 Override Election	4.995	6,500,000
Total General Fund	38.631	50,275,243
Bond Redemption Fund	8.019	10,436,105
TOTAL	46.650	\$60,711,348

Ms. Chandler asked what might happen if the decision to maintain the freeze on the statutory levy was reversed. Mr. Myers responded that the Colorado Supreme Court would give direction to the state as to how this would be handled. Mr. Myers remarked that since the Court has handed down its decision, a change is less likely.

Ms. Nichols asked about the fluctuations in the number of mills. Mr. Myers explained that the information presented this evening reflects the final assessed values from the county, whereas previous information was based on preliminary information. Mr. Myers further noted that the bond redemption fund also changed slightly based on some further analysis done by business services staff.

Ms. Chandler asked if the increased number of foreclosures could affect district finances. Mr. Myers responded that the district could begin to see a decline in property tax collections, although no such decline is evident yet. Any reduction in this revenue could affect the district budget.

MOTION: Ms. Howell moved that the Board of Education, Arapahoe County School District Number Six, certify the mill levies and the tax revenues for calendar year 2009 to the Board of County Commissioners of Arapahoe County, Colorado as presented this evening. SECOND: Ms. Chandler. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Participation in the State Treasurer's Interest-Free Loan Program for 2008-2009

Mr. Myers said administration is requesting the Board's approval of a resolution to request an interest-free loan from the state in an amount not to exceed \$6 million, which represents about 12 percent of the general fund levy. The anticipated amount the district will actually borrow is \$1.4 million. He explained that the district may

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need an infusion of cash during the early months of 2009 because anticipated tax revenues will not be received until after February 2009.

Mr. Myers noted that the district has not participated in this interest-free loan program since 2005, and it is likely about 23 other school districts across the state will also participate. He explained that the loan must be repaid by June 25, 2009, but LPS will probably repay in March, which is when property tax payments are the highest.

MOTION: Ms. Stanish moved that the Board of Education approve the resolution authorizing the district to participate in the State Treasurer's interest-free loan program for Colorado school districts in the aggregate amount of up to \$6 million, SECOND: Ms. Nichols. AYE: Chandler, Colwell, Howell, Nichols, Stanish. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Discussion

Superintendent's Strategic Budget Recommendation

Mr. Murphy said that the work of the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) is integral to the district's budget process, and he has received a report from the committee that addresses the anticipated \$4 million budget deficit for 2009–2010. To begin this evening's discussion, Mr. Murphy has asked the committee to present an overview of its work.

Mr. Myers reviewed the charge to the Financial Advisory Committee, which states: "To provide necessary input to the Superintendent to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding budget balancing strategies." He explained that the committee was asked: (1) to review the five year financial forecast and projected general fund deficit projections and fund balances; (2) to review and evaluate the Superintendent's Staff budget balancing strategies; and (3) to advise the superintendent on needed additional resources and reductions/efficiencies to balance the budget through 2012–2013. In September 2008, the FAC membership was expanded to represent additional perspectives, including additional community members and district staff members, to meet the specific charge, and this expanded committee held seven meetings over a two-month period.

Mr. Myers reviewed the budget forecast, which is the same as that reviewed by the Board in September. The forecast shows the budget deficit growing by about \$3 million per year because expenditures are significantly outpacing revenues. Some of the factors that contribute to the deficit include: declining enrollment, Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) employer contribution increases, health care cost forecasted increases, employee compensation, utility and fuel cost increases, unfunded mandates, and lower interest rates. Mr. Murphy stated that while costs are growing annually by \$4–5 million, annual revenue is only growing by about \$2 million.

Mr. Dan Maas, chief information officer, reviewed the committee's process, which included values such as providing students with a comprehensive education, maintaining programs that are effective and efficient, keeping reductions away from classrooms when possible, and ensuring financial responsibility. The committee also reviewed financial information, including historical information for the past 20 years. The FAC placed a high value on instructional support for all students to ensure

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progress toward the district's academic achievement goal, with a special emphasis on at risk students.

Ms. Lucinda Hundley, assistant superintendent of student support services, presented the committee's recommendations, which included the following general recommendations:

- Implement non-personnel budget reductions to the greatest extent possible.
- Implement Education Services Center reductions beyond the \$1.5 million reductions made for 2008–2009.
- Implement personnel reductions, keeping budget cuts away from classrooms to the degree possible, minimizing impact to at-risk students, and maintaining equity and access for all students as a priority.
- Implement revenue generating strategies.
- Maintain a balanced budget and avoid using undesignated reserves if possible.
- Pursue financial resources at the local, state, and national level; consider a possible mill levy election in the future.
- Implement long-term recommendations for both cost savings and revenue generation.

Cost Savings

- ✓ Analyze student transportation
- ✓ Reduce/eliminate existing programs
- ✓ Explore scheduling efficiencies at secondary schools
- ✓ Investigate further outsourcing
- ✓ Increase student enrollment in alternative education programs
- ✓ Create additional “just in time” deliveries where possible
- ✓ Shift payroll date to the end of the month
- ✓ Revisit school supply budget allocations
- ✓ Explore early retirement options
- ✓ Consider feasibility study for risk management

Revenue Generating

- ✓ Sell ad space on district virtual property
- ✓ Implement marketing program
- ✓ Pursue funding for unfunded mandates
- ✓ Pursue mill levy election
- ✓ Seek business partnerships

Specific FAC recommendations for 2009–2010, with Mr. Murphy's comments, are as follows:

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- Adjust heating and cooling temperature ranges and times. Mr. Murphy agrees with this recommendation and also recommends a district energy audit.
- Reduce rate of general fund expenditure growth by one percent. Mr. Murphy stated this is very important and indicated the district may need to build the budget differently.
- Make further reductions at ESC. Mr. Murphy said he agrees, but does not know the full impact of further ESC reductions on district programs to meet students' academic needs. He noted this is a policy question that will require further Board discussion.
- Implement transportation fee. Mr. Murphy stated this needs further study.
- Reduce general fund support of athletic/activity fund by 10 percent. Mr. Murphy recommends changing this to a five percent reduction.
- Raise fees for musical instrument rental. While Mr. Murphy indicated agreement with this recommendation, he noted that this increases costs for families. Parent members of the FAC stated that the instrument rental fees charged by the district are very low compared to retail costs.
- Shift payroll date to the end of the month. Mr. Murphy indicated this is a negotiated item that affects many people.
- Invest Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) reserves. Mr. Murphy supports this recommendation.
- Reduce school supply allocation. Mr. Murphy indicated that this is a necessary reduction.
- Implement support point sliding scale. Mr. Murphy said he supports this recommendation and said it needs further discussion as part of the weighted staffing reduction recommendation. Mr. Murphy stated that the savings realized from the consolidation of elementary schools will go to support weighted staffing. He further noted that the weighted staffing reduction will likely be about \$1.2 million or about 24 staffing positions.

One citizen addressed the Board. Sam Drury said the work done by the Financial Advisory Committee was outstanding, and he complimented the members of the committee.

Mr. Colwell stated that this is a very difficult area and he appreciates the work of FAC. Ms. Chandler also complimented FAC members on their work and said she looks forward to further discussion. She said it will be very important to carefully consider a mill levy election and demonstrate the need for this funding to the community. Ms. Stanish commented that it is important for the district to be able to balance expenditures with revenues and ensure the focus remains on what is important for students. She said a mill levy election alone is not the solution to the district's budget shortfall. Mr. Colwell said a recent *Wall Street Journal* article indicated that school districts across the nation are facing budget shortfalls. Ms. Howell said she agrees with FAC and the superintendent's recommendations overall and remarked that districts across the state are struggling to balance budgets. She asked about the timeline for decision-making.

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Mr. Murphy thanked members of the FAC for their work and said he appreciates both the immediate and long-term recommendations. He said the district must continue its efforts to contain costs because the budget cannot expand any further. Mr. Murphy said it will be important to employ budget reduction strategies that do not create class sizes so large that they become unacceptable to parents.

Mr. Murphy explained the next steps and timeline for the budget development process. He said administration will begin budget development based on enrollment projections, which are in the beginning stages. In March and April the Board will have initial budget discussions, with the final budget adoption scheduled in June to meet state statute.

Mr. Murphy stated that there are many unknowns with regard to the budget. He said low interest earnings will further affect the district budget, and if employment and sales and income tax drop state-wide, these factors will put pressure on the state budget. Even though Amendment 23 is in place and provides some assurance of school funding, the Legislature could allocate funds, but mid-year could enact a rescission that would cut funding to school districts. Given the current state of the economy, Mr. Murphy stated that he appreciated the willingness of FAC to continue its work.

Ms. Howell asked about the plan to keep the community informed about the budget process, and Mr. Murphy said Ms. Leiker will handle this. He said the district has a data base of about 300 community members that routinely receive information from the district via email. He further noted that parents involved in their school accountability committees will receive information about their enrollment projections.

Ms. Chandler remarked that she appreciates the sensitivity of the committee in supporting students with the greatest needs. Ms. Stanish asked if weighted staffing formulas will be on the Board's agenda in January, and Mr. Murphy said this information may come to the Board in a report format. Ms. Howell commented that there are many rumors in the community regarding the budget and she appreciates the plan to further study some recommendations such as the transportation fee.

Ms. Chandler asked for information about past budget cuts. Mr. Colwell asked about where dollars would go if actual costs come in lower than forecast. Mr. Murphy responded that dollars would go into the general fund to offset reductions in weighted staffing. He stated that staff reductions would probably equate to about 50 people district-wide over two years.

Elementary Student Assessment Results

Ms. Bouwman explained that this agenda item was held over from November 13. She introduced Mollie McDonald, director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and Patti Turner, coordinator of assessment.

Ms. McDonald and Ms. Turner presented district demographic information for 2008 and highlighted changes from 2007. They reported results of the 2008 Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) for Grade 3 with comparisons to 2006 and 2007. The Grade 2 writing assessment is a district-developed test, and 2008 results show

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declines that will be further analyzed. Ms. McDonald stated that there are gaps between male and female writing scores that need to be addressed.

Ms. McDonald and Ms. Turner shared the results from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) for Reading, Writing, and Math, Grades 3–5, and Science, Grade 5. The presentation included observations about student performance by subgroup. Matched cohort data was also provided. Ms. Turner said this district-developed information will be phased out and replaced by the state's growth model.

Mr. Murphy asked if the writing prompts in the CSAP test affect scores.

Ms. McDonald responded that often the writing prompts are more aligned with female writing skills. Mr. Colwell asked about some of the significant results of the CSAP tests. Ms. Turner noted that math is nearly as strong as reading at the elementary level and writing needs improvement. She also highlighted progress made in various subgroups. Ms. McDonald commented that administration is not satisfied with the science scores, and although overall trends are positive, gaps exist in subgroups.

Ms. Chandler asked if there are other barriers besides gender in the writing CSAP. Ms. Turner explained that the district does not teach to the test, but focuses on standards. She said the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment helps identify strengths and weaknesses. Ms. Bouwman commented that often teachers don't think of themselves as good writers, and she believes the district needs to focus on professional development in this area. She also said that it will be interesting to see if the Eee personal computers make any difference in the quality of student writing. Ms. McDonald said the district will continue to focus on essential learnings and increase teacher understanding of good writing. She emphasized that it is important to make learning interactive and engage students in meaningful activities.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results and growth data for reading and math were also presented. Ms. Turner commented that the MAP growth data showed students made more growth than predicted. Ms. McDonald noted that there is a strong correlation between MAP results as a predictor of CSAP performance.

Mr. Colwell asked about students in the economically disadvantaged subgroup, and Ms. McDonald said this is a self-reported field because parents must complete paperwork to receive free or reduced lunch and thus be part of this subgroup.

Ms. McDonald also noted that district services to homeless students have risen from 61 students last year to 98 students this year, a 68 percent increase.

Ms. Howell said she appreciates the focus on the Grade 2 writing assessment to analyze declining scores. Mr. Murphy asked when a change in a score becomes statistically significant. Ms. Turner responded that a five percent change is considered significant, although that can vary. Mr. Colwell asked if a one to three percent change within a subgroup is significant, and Ms. Turner responded that because the group is smaller, this percentage change is worth noting.

School Accreditation Update and Recommendations

Ms. Bouwman presented the process for accreditation, explaining that the State Board of Education accredits school districts, and local boards of education accredit schools. Ms. Bouwman said that all school improvement plans meet state accreditation requirements and recommends the Board accredit all district schools.

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She noted that 2008–2009 is the final year of the current three-year cycle for school improvement and new plans will be written next year.

Ms. Bouwman provided information about the district review of school improvement plans, which included a review by the Learning Support Team (LST) and by the District Accountability Committee (DAC). Ms. Bouwman said LST noted that principals and school administrators have a better understanding of goal setting and the overall school improvement process. LST also noted that support for the school improvement process is increasing among staff and community. “Telling the story” is an area in need of improvement. Comments from the DAC review mentioned the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) process as a positive tool for school improvement and noted evidence of a focus on writing and the Universal Literacy Framework in the plans.

Ms. Howell commented on the level of engagement by DAC members in the review process, noting the attendance at the review meeting was excellent. Ms. Chandler said she was pleased to see that DAC members were very involved in the process. Ms. Stanish complimented Ms. Bouwman on the DAC review process, which involved each school representative presenting a school improvement goal in a small group setting. Ms. Bouwman said these volunteers learned more about their school improvement process as a result of their preparation to present information at the DAC meeting. Mr. Colwell expressed his thanks to DAC members for their work.

This item will return for action on January 15, 2009.

Future Agenda/Adjournment

Mr. Murphy distributed a draft agenda for the January 15, 2009, Board meeting. Action items include School Accreditation Recommendation and East Elementary School Playground Grant Application. Discussion items include Board Policy Revisions IKA, IKA-R—Grading/Assessment System, IKE—Promotion and Retention of Students, and IKF, IKF-E—Graduation Requirements, Library/Media Program Update, and Proposed District Calendars for 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 School Years.

MOTION: Ms. Stanish 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 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Colwell
President

Sue Chandler
Secretary

ks (1/22/09)