



MINUTES OF MEETING

GROUP: District Accountability Committee

DATE: Wednesday, April 15, 2009

LOCATION: ESC Board Room

PRESENT:

Lydia Veeder	Marit Smith
Julie Bagnall	Carla Donelson
Greg Cogdal	Lynn Barta Montgomery
Melissa Radulovich	Angie Barner
Jamie Driscoll	Dallas Jones
Bob Vidal	Emily Fuchs
Korina Padilla	Laura Perez
Sharon Fons	Carrie Warren-Gully, Co-chair
Tammy Harimon	Kelly Perez, Co-chair
Julie Bank	Connie Bouwman, Administrative liaison
Bill Hamilton	Renee Howell, Board liaison

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sue Chandler	Bob Colwell
Mary Nichols	Lucie Stanish
Scott Murphy	Sam Drury

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Carrie Warren-Gully, DAC co-chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. She expressed appreciation to members for their commitment to DAC throughout the year. She also thanked Kelly Perez who has served as co-chair, and LPS staff members for their time in supporting DAC.

Kelly Perez, DAC co-chair asked members if their school accountability committee meets before or after the monthly DAC meetings. She encouraged school representatives to provide timely communication to school accountability committee members about information received at DAC meetings. Kelly also encouraged DAC members to include ideas for future topics on tonight's meeting evaluation.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

Carrie Warren-Gully asked if there were any corrections to the March 18, 2009 minutes. There were none. The minutes were accepted as presented.

3. **Board Liaison Report**

Renee Howell thanked DAC members for their attendance at meetings this year.

4. **Conversation with Board of Education and Superintendent's Remarks**

Scott Murphy, superintendent, highlighted various district activities. He said the recent school finance symposium was attended by about 80 people and provided good information, which can be found on the district web site. Scott encouraged members to visit the site often to stay abreast of changing financial developments. Scott also commented about federal stimulus funds and Race to the Top competitive grants. He stated that the district budget will present ongoing challenges for the next several years as costs increase and funding remains flat.

Scott mentioned the Educational Technology Information Literacy (ET-IL) Plan, which can be viewed on the district web site. He invited members to visit district blogs.

Carrie Warren-Gully introduced Board members Sue Chandler, Bob Colwell, Renee Howell, Mary Nichols, and Lucie Stanish. Highlights from the conversation include the following:

Q. What can citizens suggest to the Legislature about funding K-12 that doesn't impact another important area of the state budget?

A. Things are changing quickly as the legislative session winds down. The state does not have enough revenue to cover the services it provides and is facing a major revenue issue. The only way to balance the current state budget is through cuts that reduce expenditures.

Q. What is the status of negotiations between the district and the teachers' union? What about reducing transportation costs?

A. Because the district does not know what the funding level will be for 2009-2010, it is difficult to conduct negotiations, so that process is on hold until the Legislature determines the funding level. Providing transportation to students is not required by law, so it could be eliminated, but this is difficult for some parents.

Q. Will the district close more schools?

A. No additional school closures are planned.

Q. Will the district consider selling schools that have closed?

A. Probably not, at least not in the foreseeable future. Administration is working on a plan to repurpose Ames and Whitman, which will include community use of some space. More information about the usage plan will be coming soon. It is important for these buildings to remain as assets to the community and the district.

Q. There is a disparity between LPS high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements, making it difficult for students to take all the necessary classes.

A. The Board has been waiting for revisions to state model content standards before making any changes to graduation requirements. The Board believes in a broad-based, comprehensive high school experience to expose students to a variety of curricular offerings. Funding, staffing, and scheduling are challenging issues at the high school level, and administration continues to monitor these issues.

Q. If LPS changes graduation requirements to align with college entrance requirements, the district could lose students. It is important to maintain some balance to meet the needs of all students.

A. The conversation about graduation requirements will continue. Colorado colleges and universities accept LPS graduates. Students need to be informed about what is needed to pursue their personal post-graduate goals and make appropriate choices in high school.

Q. Will there be a review of the new elementary grading process?

A. Administration has no plan currently to evaluate the elementary report card, but it could be done. There is a strong research base that supports the new grading structure.

Q. Is there a plan to bring more consistency among schools for math instruction?

A. The district is working on this, and it will probably take another year to get everything in place.

Q. What is the status of progress on the district Strategic Plan?

A. This is a long-range plan. Progress to date is good, and there is room for improvement. The district is not moving forward as quickly as desired. Administration has a better understanding of the achievement level of individual students. Integrating technology into learning is one area where good progress is being made, with wall-to-wall wireless available throughout the district.

Q. The Westminster school district has initiated non-graded classrooms. Would LPS consider this?

A. LPS, along with other school districts, are watching this innovation. The LPS Pyramid of Intervention is a model that provides specific support to individual students.

Q. A math skills test is used at Euclid at fifth and sixth grade and students are not passing this test. Some are saying the K-5 math curriculum is not working.

A. This placement test does not match the curriculum, which is why students aren't scoring well. Administration is working on the issue.

Q. What are schools going to be like next year with all the budget cuts? How will we compare with other districts?

A. Other metro school districts are facing similar financial challenges. We are all in the same "leaky boat." The state will have to talk about revenue and all areas of state-supported services.

Q. Will LPS hold a mill levy and/or a bond election?

A. No elections are planned for 2009, but the Board will need to have conversations about possible mill levy and bond elections in future years. There is currently \$40 million in outstanding bond projects. LPS is close to the mill levy ceiling, but that could be changed during the current legislative session.

Scott Murphy said that LPS is well-known and well-regarded state-wide. LPS has a strong community and strong leaders. He said that closing two elementary schools was a very difficult decision but it resulted in increased enrollment at six other LPS elementary schools. It will make a positive difference in the elementary program district-wide. Sue Chandler said it will be important to learn more about what parents value as the district continues to make difficult financial decisions. Board members thanked DAC members for their questions and invited members to call if they have more questions or want to further discuss issues and challenges.

6. **Meeting Evaluation and Closure**

Kelly Perez distributed the meeting evaluation survey and explained that the information gathered each month helps in planning future DAC meetings and evaluating the overall success of DAC that becomes part of its annual report to the Board.

Wrap-up

The next DAC meeting is September 16, 2009.

Submitted by
Kerry Schaper