

I. PRELIMINARY

Cook called the August 21, 2007, meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

The following members were present:

Matt Cook, president
Jeanette Carmany, vice president
Susan Tabacheck, secretary
Judy Edberg, treasurer
Jane Barber, director
Edward Lord, director

The following members were absent:

Debbie Barton, director

Also meeting with the Board of Education were:

John L. Barry, superintendent of school
Anthony Van Gytenbeek, deputy superintendent
Lisa Escárcega, chief operating officer
William Stuart, chief operating officer
Anthony W. Sturges, chief operating officer
Rodney R. Weeks, chief financial officer
Kari J. Allen, chief personnel officer
Tonia Norman, assistant to Board of Education

Pledge of Allegiance

Cook led the Board and audience in the pledge to the flag. He then welcomed visitors to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Cook made a motion to amend the agenda and table information item II-A-2, Section E – Support Services policy revision.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education held August 21, 2007, were approved as written. The August 7, 2007, minutes were amended to reflect a change to page 8103 in that, Lord moved and Barton seconded to move information item II-C-1 to action. Cook requested that Stuart provide additional information to the Board. This item was tabled. Cook made a change to page 8104 in that, Barry replied that renaming an administrative building does require Board approval. Cook requested that information item II-D-1 be presented again as action.

II. INFORMATION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Items of Current Interest

Barry invited the audience to the groundbreaking ceremony for our new K-8 magnet school. The event will be held Wednesday, August 29, from 5 to 6 p.m. The school site is located on East 1st Avenue near the APS Transportation Department. The new school will serve the Aurora Quest Elementary and Summit Academy middle school programs at one location. The school will also offer more than 300 additional students the opportunity to join the K-8 program.

Aurora Quest Academy is one of the highest performing schools in Colorado, having earned an "Excellent" rating since opening its doors in 1999. For the third consecutive year, third grade CSAP scores ranked Aurora Quest as one of only two schools in the state where all students were proficient.

Barry thanked the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for hosting the "State of the Schools" event. He joined Colorado Education Commissioner Dwight Jones and Cherry Creek Superintendent Monte Moses in updating the community on the state of education in Aurora. He also thanked the U.S. Chamber, First Bank of Aurora, and the Foundation for Educational Excellence for sponsoring the event.

Barry thanked Cheryl Dalton, who is also the assistant to the superintendent, for serving as the Classified Employee Council president for the last two years. Her hard work and dedication have helped make CEC the success that it is today. We appreciate all that she has done and continues to do for APS. We welcome Fletcher Tech Educational Assistant Donna Gondrez as her successor.

Carmany congratulated and thanked all of the teachers, principals, and classified staff for making the opening of school exciting and successful for students and the APS community. In my experience, it is the norm, not the exception that teachers and staff report to school early to prepare their classrooms, review class rolls, greet students, and make sure our students receive the most optimal education possible.

This past week, we have been bombarded with information about Manuel High School. The media has shared that 650 people came out to plant trees, paint classrooms, and get school ready for their freshman class. I am asking 650 people from the APS community to show up before we are in a crisis situation in any of our schools. Help us make the commitment that this staff has made to make APS the best school district in the state of Colorado.

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

No Items

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Instructional Materials Adoption

Lord motioned and Tabacheck seconded to un-table information item II-C-1.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7907

The motion to un-table item II-C-1 passed on a vote of 6-0.

Stuart requested to bring back to the Board as information, item II-C-1, Daily Language Instruction resource for the elementary writing block.

Cook clarified to the audience that the Board had a workshop on Saturday and received in-depth information regarding the purpose of the Daily Language

Instruction resource. The Board now has a better understanding of its purpose and use in the classroom.

Tabacheck motioned and Lord seconded to move item II-C-1 to action.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7908

The motion to move to action passed on a vote of 6-0.

DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

Drainage Easement at Vassar Elementary School

Sturges shared that the City of Aurora is requesting a .0494-acre drainage easement as part of the parking lot project at Vassar Elementary School. This project is submitted to the Board for consideration. Sturges invited Josh Hensley to the table to answer questions.

Hensley explained that the drainage easement is part of the parking lot extension and turning lane project that was presented as information to the Board on August 7.

Barber asked how old the gas line was. Hensley was unsure of the exact age of the pipe, but explained that the original easement went through in 1949. He believes that new pipe has been put in and the gas line is continually maintained. The company has an electronic system used to check for leaks and it can be shut off at any time if one is detected.

Barber emphasized that these are our kids. Hensley replied that we maintain close contact with the company and our Risk Management department. The company also provides information to share with the principal at Vassar and the Board that explains safety measures in place to ensure that pipes are safe. Hensley offered to forward Barber a copy of the information. Barber requested a copy of the information.

Cook stated that this item will be presented as action on September 4 and requested that Hensley present information at that time.

Sturges suggested that the Board visit Vassar to see improvements if they had an opportunity to do so.

Sidewalk Easement at Dalton Elementary School

Sturges shared that the City of Aurora is requesting a .0206-acre sidewalk easement as part of the bond renewal project at Dalton Elementary. This project is submitted to the Board for consideration.

Hensley shared that there is a parking lot loop being constructed at Dalton. This easement would connect the new sidewalk and loop to the existing sidewalk.

Lord motioned and Barber seconded to move item II-D-2 to action.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7909

The motion to move to action passed on a vote of 6-0.

DIVISION OF FINANCE

No items

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

Assessment Workshop

New Structure

Escárcega invited Dan Jorgensen and Julie Foster to the table to present information. She informed the audience that the Board restructured their meeting format this year. The first meeting of the month will be a regular business meeting; the second meeting of the month will be a workshop. One or two topics will be chosen to study for professional development for the Board and the public.

Escárcega gave a brief overview of the new Division of Accountability and Research. She introduced Dan Jorgensen and Julie Foster. Jorgensen is the specialist, program evaluator, for the Division of Accountability and Research. His last position was in the Denver Public Schools, where he worked as a planner and program evaluator. Julie Foster is the assistant to the chief accountability and research officer. She is a graduate of Rangeview High School. Mary Beth Lehto is the coordinator, accountability and research, for the Division of Accountability and Research. She is a former math teacher at Rangeview High School and a graduate of Aurora Central High School.

Jorgensen thanked the Board for the opportunity to present and shared that he is excited to be working in APS. He introduced the remaining Division of Accountability and Research staff that was not present at the meeting.

James Coe, senior programmer, is responsible for the I-Cam module in Infinite Campus. He provides a lot of the assessment related data and reporting. Charlotte Flower, department secretary, is the glue that holds the department together. Claudia Paz, technician, accountability and research, is responsible for the distribution of assessments and materials to schools. She also helps organize assessment materials.

Jorgensen explained the historical work of the division. The division is responsible for assessment administration including CSAP, CELA, DERA, ACT, and benchmarks. The division is responsible for accountability reports including SAR, AYP, data notebooks, and core reports related to assessments. We provide external data requests mostly to educational organizations and universities. We also provide data to graduate students who want to take an active role in APS in terms of collecting and surveying data, quasi experimental research, or have an interest in educational services or outcomes unique to Aurora or the curriculum they are studying.

Lord questioned if graduate students requesting information were interns in APS.

Jorgensen explained that the division receives a whole range of educational requests. A graduate student or a teacher who wants to do an evaluation of a teaching method may request data or research. Prior to any research conducted, the individual has to go through a review process. On our new Web site, there is a research document that explains the process from start to finish. We collect specific information and make sure that the student's privacy is protected.

Barber questioned if that comes under the Freedom of Information Act and if we are required to provide a copy.

Escárcega explained that any kind of requests for data or research must come through the division in order to evaluate the degree in which they are in compliance with FERPA. If they are in compliance, we have to check the availability status of the report in order to minimize the time of district staff. The public cannot walk in and look at the quality of the research or the rigor. We often get dissertations or masters that come from obscure universities that are not good. We have a good screening process in place, but a lot of it has to do with FERPA.

Barber asked if there could be possible repercussions if someone is denied.

Escárcega shared that if it is necessary to deny a request and she feels there might be repercussions, she will confer with the APS Legal Office. Most requests are granted. If an individual wants to conduct research then we would review the request more carefully.

Jorgensen reviewed a list of new functions in the divisions including more developed assessment and reports.

- Edusoft - a new system that provides rapid feedback to teachers and teacher led data teams.
- The survey work that we do has become more complex
- The demand for surveys has increased and we are creating systems to monitor what surveys are being conducted in the district.
- We have systems in place where we can assist with the design and analysis of survey results.
- We have more meaningful surveys with meaningful data that we can apply.
- We are developing a survey system, which is often web-based in order to get rapid results for issues and topics that are meaningful to the district right now.
- We can send surveys via an e-mail link to teachers, principals, administrators, or other targeted populations in the district.

Tabacheck commented that if we are targeting the community, we need to have hard copies available so people without computers can access. Jorgensen replied that hard copies would still be distributed and mentioned the parent survey through CUBE as an example.

Tabacheck questioned if surveys can be taken during employee work hours.

Escárcega shared that we directed school administrator to give teachers time to complete surveys during work hours. Tabacheck also questioned if classified staff were allowed to complete surveys during work hours because some staff may not have a computer at home. Escárcega responded that classified staff could also complete surveys during work hours. She further explained that all classified staff has to complete timecards online and have access to a computer during work hours.

Jorgensen shared that we are working to enhance our data collection and access. We are developing I-Cam, the Infinite Campus module that provides CSAP or CELA results to schools. We are evaluating the VISTA 2010 plan from different angles to ensure overall effectiveness and to make sure we are getting

a good outcome. Under the people section of PACE, we are assisting with new teacher inductions and retention efforts. Under achievement, we are evaluating district initiatives such as Mondo and Reader/Writer Workshop. Under community, we are evaluating the climate surveys. Under environment, we are looking at the teacher survey and the APS organization.

Jorgensen presented an overview of the Division of Accountability and Research Web site. The site has department contact information and responsibilities, survey links, and a link for external research documentation. APS administrators and staff can also go to the internal survey link where they can complete a survey request form. Examples of survey designs, explanations, and interpretation of questions will be available via the link.

The first division newsletter can be assessed via a link on the Web site. The current newsletter contains information regarding Edusoft and an assessment calendar of events. The newsletter will be sent out quarterly. Jorgensen thanked Foster for her work on the newsletter.

Jorgensen shared that the Web site has only been up one week. We are working to make the site a comprehensive source of information. Jorgensen thanked Foster for work on the Web site. She did a good job.

Tabacheck commented that it was good to see the information on the district Web site.

Barber thanked Jorgensen for taking on the CUBE survey, which is the Association of Urban School Boards and is a national survey of every school board.

District-level CSAP data

Escárcega presented an overview of CSAP data that was presented to principals and staff three weeks ago. Students in grades three through ten took the CSAP test. Every year we look at demographics to determine if there is a shift in those grade levels. We had a one percent increase of Hispanic students who took the 2007 CSAP and a two percent decrease of White students who took the test. That is a pattern that we have seen almost every year.

- 1% Native American
1 % in 2006
- 4% Asian
4% in 2006
- 22% Black
22% in 2006
- 49% Hispanic
48% in 2006
- 24% White
26% in 2006

Escárcega reviewed a graph of historical trends related to the ethnicity count. In 1997, student populations for Hispanic and White students were reversed from what they are currently. Percentages of Asian, African American, and Native American students have remained steady for the last decade.

Demographics for other groups include:

The student population in grades three through ten increased by six percent

- 35% English Language Learner
29% in 2006

The percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch in grades three through ten increased by one percent.

- 60% Free/Reduced Lunch
59% in 2006
- 7% SLD/SIED
7% in 2006

The percentage for gifted and talented increased by one percent. This is due to increase identification efforts in the district. Escárcega shared that eight percent is about the state average. The state demographic is about 8.6 percent.

- 8% Gifted and Talented
7% in 2006

Escárcega shared that from 2002 to 2007, the percentage of ELL students in the district has doubled. In 2002, the percentage was 17 percent. The percentage for 2007 is 35 percent.

There was a slight decrease in fully English proficient students. The way we are identifying students accounts for some of the decrease. The exit criteria in the new CELA test is more stringent than before and students are being identified more appropriately. The performance of our ELL students closely mirrors state standards as a result of stricter guidelines.

Escárcega presented an overview of stability percentages for the past three years.

- 72% of Grade 3-10 students taking the CSAP in 2007 attended APS in spring of 2005.
- 73% of Grade 3-10 students taking the CSAP in 2006 attended APS in spring of 2004.
- 67% of Grade 3-10 students taking the CSAP in 2004 attended APS in spring of 2002.

The overall 2007 CSAP results that were reported out to the media were seven gains and seven losses. The remaining changes were not significant, which resulted in a flat performance district wide.

- Five gains in math, two losses
- Most of our gains have been in math the last few years
- One gain in writing, one loss
- One gain in science
- Four losses in reading
- Most of the significant losses were in reading

Escárcega was surprised of the rigor of reporting flat performances statewide. Usually one district is showcased, but this year only schools were showcased.

One of the four losses occurred in fourth grade elementary reading. The state also went down four percent in reading. Two more significant losses occurred in middle school reading. Over the years, we have seen flat or slightly declining scores in reading except in grade seven. Seventh grades scores had increased about five percent over the last five years.

There was a five percent decrease in reading scores from fifth to sixth grade for three consistent years. The middle schools have started to request fifth grade test scores so they can talk to staff about instructional goals to keep students at the height of their academic abilities.

Lord questioned if K-8 schools would solve the problem. Escárcega replied that we are currently reviewing data to determine if that will solve the problem. We have two years of data from Murphy Creek that we will be reviewing.

In high school reading, ninth and tenth grade scores were very flat. Over the past five years, tenth grade reading scores have decreased about 10 percent; ninth grade reading scores have not changed. This was the fourth area that we saw a significant loss. There was a slight loss between eighth and ninth grades, but not as significant as between fifth and sixth grades.

Escárcega shared that writing is our lowest area of performance with the exception of high school math. We did see some gain in third and fifth grades. Third and fourth grade scores have had slow declines over the last five years but fifth grades scores have held steady.

The pattern seen when reviewing data speaks to a district with a high percent of English Language Learners. Writing is the last thing that is taught to ELL students. In third and fourth grades they usually struggle with writing, but by fifth grade they become more proficient. Fifth grade teachers are working hard to catch students up to grade level, but the key is not to let them fall behind in third and fourth grades.

We saw a significant gain in seventh grade writing and the state also showed gains. Writing scores were mostly flat with the exception of fourth grade, which declined slightly more.

When we reviewed data between state and district scores, we show a 20 percent gap. In writing, the gap is not present among unsatisfactory students. We do not have 20 percent more unsatisfactory students; we just have a lot of kids who are partially proficient. Writing is the area with the fewest unsatisfactory students in comparison to reading and math. The good news is that many of our kids are in the high partially proficient range and we will not have to work as hard to move them to proficient in writing.

We saw consistent gains in math over a period of time.

- Third grade math scores increased by seven percent over three years.
- Fourth grade math scores increased by 10 percent over two years of instruction.
- Fifth grade math scores increased by nine percent.

The gap between the district and the state when it comes to math in elementary dipped into the teens. We are the closest district to state performance.

Third grade math teachers were disappointed to see a three percent loss this year after having a 10 ten percent gain last year. Statistics and other indicators reveal that part of the drop has to do with student transition. You usually hold on to only seven percent of the gain when you have a new set of students. Third grade math teachers did see improvement in instruction; they will have to rebuild to see improvement again.

Tabacheck asked how we look nationwide. Escárcega shared that we cannot compare ourselves to other national tests because the test is not equated.

Escárcega shared that we saw are largest gains in middle school math. She commented to Aurora Sentinel reporter Boyd Fletcher that APS middle schools made AYP in math in 2007, which is a tremendous accomplishment.

Tabacheck asked for a refresher on scoring of the math assessment. Escárcega explained that on the math assessment the typical drop over a four year period is almost 20 percent statewide. When students reach tenth grade, the state average for proficiency is 30 to 35 percent. In third grade, students start at about 60 percent and we follow the statewide trend.

Escárcega shared that in middle school math, we saw a reduction in the achievement gap. All students moved up, but African American and Hispanic students moved more. African American and Hispanic students have not completely caught up to White students, but the gap is decreasing.

We saw a three percent decrease in ninth grade math scores and a two percent decrease in tenth grade math scores. The state average is about 30 or 35 percent, and that is also low. We showed a 20 percent gap in ninth and tenth grade math scores. We saw an increase in tenth grade science scores and a significant increase in fifth grade science scores.

Escárcega presented an overview of the achievement gap. In reading and writing, there were no reductions of achievement. The achievement gap between African American and White students was about 19 percent. The state gap is about 29 percent. One reason is that our highest achievers are not performing at the state level. In math, the achievement gap moved up for all students. In 2006-07, we are introducing the third and fourth grade results in order to provide a sense of where APS compares to the state.

We showed a six percent gap between African American students and the state in math. We showed a four percent gap between Hispanic students and the state. We showed a 12 percent gap between White students and the state.

Escárcega maintained data on a cohort group for four years to determine if students maintained proficiency. Results showed flat performances in both reading and writing.

The state tracked the performance of students who took the CSAP test in third grade and then looked at scores of the same students in fifth grade to determine performance stability.

Escárcega shared that 66 percent of those students who were unsatisfactory on the third grade CSAP test were still unsatisfactory in fifth grade. If you were to look at additional data at the state level, it would be the same for most subjects and in most categories. It is not easy to move a student from unsatisfactory to proficient in a year or two, especially after third grade. If students are proficient in reading in eighth grade, 85 percent of them are proficient in ninth grade. If a student is below grade level, below partial proficient in third grade, the chances of he/she becoming solidly proficient are very small the way the system is currently set up.

There was an 11 percent decrease in math scores among students in the cohort

group over the four year period. It is typically a 20 percent decrease. We were able to hold on to math proficiencies for students who have been in the district consistently.

Escárcega presented an overview of reading performances for five student groups; AGATE, learning disabilities, ELL, fully English proficient, and English speakers and explained the importance of disaggregating data.

- The AGATE group was at 94 percent proficient or advanced; the state is at 96 percent.
- AGATE students were equal to state performance.
- The learning disabilities group was at 13 percent, the state is at 18 percent.
- Our numbers are fairly equal to the state based on the number of students that we have.
- The ELL group was at 26 percent, the state is at 20 percent. We had a 33 percent increase of ELL students compared to eight percent in the state.
- The fully English proficient group was at 73 percent and the state is at 59 percent.
- Our fully English proficient students have typically out performed the state's fully English proficient students.
- APS exit criteria is reasonable and appropriate; other districts are exiting students too quickly.
- Fully English proficient means that you are reading at proficiency or at least a high partial proficient or above on CSAP and have passed the reading proficiency/language proficiency assessment.
- Our numbers are more reasonable to where they should be.
- The English speaking group was at 55 percent and the state is at 73 percent.
- This is where we see the gap. Escárcega explained that the gap is due to the 33 percent increase of ELL students in APS compared to the eight percent in the state. When you average district scores and the number of students in the lower performing group increases, your average comes down.

Barry clarified that it was a 35 percent increase of ELL students and expressed that this is very compelling. We saw a five percent growth in reading for ELL students and a four percent growth in math. The average growth for the total district was .4 percent. Even with the population growth of our ELL students from 29 to 35 percent, we saw growth in reading and math.

Escárcega explained the importance of comparing district percents to state percents. If we can move our ELL students to perform at 73 percent, we have a case to go to the state and share that all of our groups do not match yours. Until our ELL students reach 73 percent, there is no case to be made. What this really speaks to is rigor for all students. We need to increase rigor to help our ELL students become proficient.

When you continually work with and see kids who are not proficient, your sense of what is proficient drops and you accept work that is less than proficient. It may be necessary to go outside the district, and look at what other kids are doing at proficient levels to keep your sense of perspective. This is the whole point of Mondo, America's Choice Standards, and other instructional strategies and supports we implemented to increase teacher perspective.

Lord commented that we are spending so much time and focus on ELL students, we are forgetting about the White kids. Escárcega reiterated that it is not the

time and focus spent on ELL students, it is the lack of rigor and the work that is being presented and accepted. We are not forgetting the perception of what students can do; it is what they should be doing that is being reduced. You just lose that perspective. The work that the Division of Instruction is doing and the focus on fidelity of implementation cannot be completed without increasing rigor.

Barber commented that so much of the lives of students, teachers, and administrators are based on one day of testing. Students take the test in March and we do not get results until August. This needs to be addressed by the state and the legislature.

Escárcega expressed that CSAP is a good test that teachers helped develop and it is most aligned with what most kids see on a daily basis. The accountability attached to the test is inappropriate.

Tabacheck asked for clarification on whether APS lowered expectations or standards of teaching for any of our students. She asked because of the comment from Lord regarding the diversity difference. She asked Escárcega for clarification on whether we are accepting a lower performance rather than pushing to reach our higher goals.

Escárcega explained that was part of it. Many teachers will show proficient work of a third grade student that differs from proficient work of a third grade student from a teacher who works in Douglas County and has worked with highly proficient students continually. You lose a sense of proficiency.

Stuart explained that before there were standards that ran across the state and nation, this phenomenon was worse because there were no external measure to review. When you have a highly impacted district versus one that is less impacted, you start to drift in terms of what is accepted as quality work. We need to focus and support a true standards-based system and ensure everyone knows the expectations for every grade level, every content level, and we need to continually support it. We also want to help our parents understand what proficiency is at every grade level and in every content level so they can monitor student work at home. We need to always keep that measure in terms of what is proficient and how to move kids to that level.

Tabacheck commented that APS does a fantastic job, but we cannot compare ourselves to Douglas County because we do not have the same student population. I believe that our teachers are striving for high expectations. There is a balance in APS that has not yet hit Douglas County.

Carmany agreed that we cannot compare our whole score to Douglas County, but we can compare our ELL students to the ELL students in Douglas County. She commented that there is a difference between the socially economic groups in the two districts that is also a factor. We have not lowered our standards; we just may not have understood what the standards were. It is the English speaking kids in APS that we can compare to Douglas County.

Stuart shared that the free and reduced lunch statistics cuts across all ethnic groups and it is a factor to look at when comparing districts.

Barry commented that in the strategic plan we talk about standards-based grading. Last year we requested writing prompts from all of our students. We asked principals to submit what they believed were proficient writing samples for their prospective grades and we found small and large disparities between

grades and schools.

We now have the America's Choice Standards as a reference source. This is a national, well-researched reference source. We no longer have to debate this issue because this reference puts us on a level playing field. It is the same standard used in Douglas County and throughout the nation. This will get us to where we need to be in order to be competitive in the country and in the world.

Cook commented at the Board workshop on Saturday a presenter expressed that expectations had not been fully explained to students. We now have a plan to increase proficiency and we can share expectations with students. Rigor and high expectations have been discussed across the board from the parent, to the student, to the teacher, to the administrator, and to the Board of Education. We all know where we are trying to get to, what the goal looks like, and we now have a road map to get there.

Lehto was a professional learning community leader at Rangeview and taught honors and regular classes. We asked teachers to bring student samples of proficient work. They were adamant that work presented from their students were examples of proficient or advanced work until we shared samples from honors classes. If teachers are not exposed to higher level kids or proficient work they tend to lose perspective. That is what causes the drop in expectations. Teachers do not feel that students are incapable; they just need to see examples of exemplary work.

Lord commented that our top kids in APS can compete with kids anywhere. We get just as many scholarships as Cherry Creek and Douglas County. This is a big fall out primarily for White kids. Lehto explained that it is not necessarily a fall out for White kids; it is more a fall out for English speakers, Hispanic kids whose first language is English. Lord agreed and shared that it does have to do with economics. Lehto reiterated that expectations have to rise and we need to uphold the highest rigors possible in order for our kids to compete globally.

Barry commented that we are encouraging principals and teachers to share proficient work with parents.

Carmany shared that one thing we need to educate our public on is that skills that were considered proficient are no longer valid. The bar across the country has been raised by one or two levels in all grades and that is something that is not understood by everyone.

Escárcega presented an overview of ACT data. ACT scores increased slightly over a three year period. The cohort group that was tracked showed a .4 or .5 increase, and the number of students who took the ACT test increased by 17 percent.

Escárcega and Lehto presented an overview of interim assessments. Lehto shared that the interim assessments are replacing the math benchmark assessments and math testing. We will have interim assessments in reading, writing, and math that align with CSAP and district pacing guides. Each assessment is 45 to 60 minutes in length depending on grade level. Tests are made up of a combination of multiple choice and constructed responses. Each assessment contains 20 items except for the assessment given at the end of first quarter. This assessment will have 25 questions on it due to the extra five items that we can carry over to next year as anchor items. Assessments will be given in first, second, and fourth quarters. A third quarter assessment will not be given due to CSAP.

Carmany asked for clarification regarding testing times for reading, writing and math assessments. Escárcega shared that the total is three hours, three times a year.

Escárcega shared that we contracted with Princeton to build assessments. They requested documents, which primarily included pacing guides and benchmark assessments. They took the information and put it into a blueprint. They asked for standards we wanted measured and how many items we wanted included under each standard using pacing guides. We used the state assessment as information to determine which standard is most heavily assessed. A group of instructional coordinators and teachers selected from different buildings comprised the committee. Once they completed the first process, the representative from Princeton reviewed and returned items that matched our requirements. The committee convened and went through requirements item by item and made revisions especially in math because we are very much an integrated program, and very standards-based. After we received feedback from Princeton, the committee made additional revisions and sent a formal, final set of requirements for review.

Escárcega presented secured CSAP packets to the Board and explained information regarding the grade sixth reading release item on the CSAP test. Students read information and answer questions; some multiple choice questions and some open ended questions to check for reading comprehension.

The answer section of the teacher's edition provides correct answers and explains why answers are correct or incorrect. This allows teachers to assess student learning and prepare next steps. Teacher editions come with every reading, writing, and math assessment. Teachers are now allowed to keep booklets and student assessments for several weeks after the test is completed and work with identified students that need help. They will also be able to assess reports from a software program that contains the data.

Barry shared that we were using the MAP assessment to measure student growth. If a student answered questions correctly on the test they proceeded to the next level. If they missed a question they would go to a lower level. A student might typically have a whole series of different questions throughout the course of the test. Teachers did not have access to the test; they only received scores and were not able to measure growth.

Teachers at every third grade level at every elementary school will now have the same test. We can pinpoint more accurately where we are making progress and where we need to intervene. The intervention strategy will help move students more readily. This is an extremely valuable tool for the teachers and they will be able to determine what works and what has not.

Edusoft, the new technology software, will have data that we included in charts. As an example, if we are trying to get to a third grade 3.2 standard that was missed by most of the class. The teacher can hit on 3.2 and a met tracker will be sent immediately. A met tracker is a whole data of information that is available to the teacher. In there will be a possible lesson plan, a possible video, and instructional elements on strategies to improve instruction. It is another assessment on how to strengthen the student's capability on that one standard. This is how technology will be used to as an assessment with proper metrics to give the teacher another intervention tool. This is how it all connects to the strategic plan and how it will make the intervention more strategic.

Escárcega further explained that the idea is not to re-teach the exact item but use information in data team meetings to discuss further instructional strategies. What are the measured items kids have not learned? What can we teach better next quarter and what kind of supports can we put in place to support student learning?

Escárcega shared that the teacher's edition of the writing assessment has the same type of answer section as the reading assessment, providing correct answers and explaining why answers are correct. The writing assessment does not contain extended responses like CSAP because it would be too long on a quarterly basis for teachers to score. Students will complete paragraph writing, which is a typical assignment that a language arts teacher would assign.

Carmany questioned if the interim assessments were reliable and valid. Escárcega replied that we will run statistics on all of the items. If they are ineffective, we will delete them. The validity comes in the content. Teachers have chosen this item and have stated that they are valid for the purpose of measuring progress through the first, second, third, and fourth quarter of pacing guides. The reliability will be calculated afterward.

Lehto presented an overview of the math assessment packet. She reviewed release items on data analysis. Students are given a table and asked to plot the data, draw lines, write an equation, and make predictions. In the teacher edition, it measures the exact same standard and is similar in format to the reading and writing packets.

Lehto shared an example of a constructive response graded on a three point rubric. It is similar to grading a paragraph in the writing assessment. Math response analyses were the same as reading and writing, providing the correct answer and explaining what the student did wrong if the answer is incorrect.

Lehto shared how math benchmark assessment data was used at the end of two units and at the end of the quarter to assess student learning while teaching at Rangeview. We felt results were valid and reliable in measuring standards and big ideas in the pacing guides. We would use data to determine student proficiency levels, determine student challenges, and plan for the next quarter. If I were a classroom teacher this year, I would be grateful that we switched from benchmarks to interim assessment because it provides more data analysis and response analysis for each student. Once you have the response analysis, you can move forward with the intervention piece as opposed to trying to analyze data and determine which part of the benchmark the student didn't reach. Edusoft will be a valuable tool for teachers and will save time.

Escárcega presented an overview of the Mondo assessment to the Board. The assessments are more like probes than sub tests. The test should take no time to give to kindergarten students. The assessment would take a little longer for students in first and second grades. Students will not have to take the assessments once they top out.

Escárcega reviewed the connection between the National Reading Panel and the five areas of literacy including phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and fluency and comprehension. We were always measuring comprehension. We had a DERA assessment, but we were not measuring the other four areas. We brought in fluency last year, but the other three, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness were areas that we were not measuring. In retrospect, we were really

out of compliance and best practices as well. The Mondo assessment is incorporated into the instructional materials that we adopted and the assessment aligns with the curriculum.

Escárcega reviewed one of the new oral language assessments. When I taught ELL classes, assessing oral language and monitoring student's oral language was difficult for teachers to grasp. One reason is they don't know language acquisition. We lacked a nice, short assessment that teachers could give to ELL students. As teachers are learning how to give the assessment, they are being given professional development on stages of language acquisition that students are taught. Teachers check for oral language by reading a sentence to the student and the student repeats the same sentence back. In the new Mondo schools, teachers can repeat the oral language assessment as often as necessary to check for progress. This is also a key component used by teachers when setting up reading groups.

Escárcega reviewed print concepts; a screening instrument used as a pre- and post-assessment in kindergarten to determine the readiness of emergent readers. This is not a new tool, but it is part of the assessment.

The next one is phonemic awareness and this sub test is new to the district. Teachers asked students to repeat a word to check for sounds.

Letter and sound knowledge is a sub test used for letter identification screening in kindergarten. This test has always been used as a screening tool.

Letter sound correspondence is a phonics sub test used to determine whether students can sound out words instead of relying on word recognition.

Teachers have received a great deal of professional development training on assessment. Results of probes and sub tests are entered onto an academic profile sheet. Students are then identified and put into similar groups. Scores are entered onto a bubble sheet and will be scanned so overall proficiency scores are readily available.

DERA/DRA2

The DERA, District Elementary Reading Assessment, will be phased out this year and replaced with DRA2. The schedule is as follows:

- All new students in K-5 will be tested in the fall
- Students who are below grade level in grades K-5 will be tested mid-year
- All students will be tested in the spring to be in compliance with the Colorado literacy act. All students in grades K-3 must be assessed yearly.

The DRA2 assessment will be introduced to grades kindergarten to second in January and third through fifth grades in early April (after CSAP).

Escárcega shared an example of assessment procedures. Teachers select an appropriate book and asked students to follow directions. They monitor student reading by asking them to look at a picture and read aloud. They make notes if a student skipped, missed, or self corrected a word. Teachers then review a chart to determine the student's fluency score.

Training will be provided on the DRA2 assessment and kits will be purchased for all elementary schools.

Lord asked for the total cost to purchase kits for the entire district. Escárcega replied that it will be a one time cost of \$125,000 to provide kits for the entire district.

Barber questioned if the DRA2 will take less time than the DERA. Escárcega replied that it would take less. Once teachers become proficient it will take even less time.

Lord asked how much time is spent testing elementary students. Lehto shared that it depends on the grade level.

Barry clarified that the first time a teacher implements the assessment it will take some time. In the Mondo pilot program that we implemented last spring, it did take some teachers longer to implement tests and there was some confusion about the number of test to give. Based on lessons learned last spring, we will put additional help and supports in the school to take the load off teachers. Testing should take less than a week. Mondo representatives informed us that it would take two days. When we have used assessments for a while it may take two days.

ACT – College Entrance Assessment

Lehto shared that ACT has designed some college readiness benchmarks, which are minimum scores on the Explorer, Plan, and the ACT that predict the probability of success in college courses. Scores were based on the actual performance of freshmen college students. Grades were compared to English, algebra, biology, and social sciences on the ACT scores.

The Plan is given in tenth grade and the Explorer is given in the eighth and ninth grades. Using English as an example, Lehto reviewed the benchmark score to gauge college readiness. A student in the eighth or ninth grade would need to score a 13 or above and a student in tenth grade would need to score a 15 or above. The minimum score of 18 is needed to be considered college ready on the ACT test. The minimum score may be higher depending on the college or university.

The Explorer test is given in the eighth and ninth grade and serves as our baseline data to monitor growth. The test prepares students for high school course work and expectations, and it helps determine postsecondary career choices.

Stuart shared that these assessments help facilitate conversations with parents and students about college readiness at an early age. It gives parents concrete ideas on where their students are in terms of postsecondary options. Students are mailed a comprehensive report after taking the Explorer, Plan, or ACT test. It is mandatory by the district that all eighth and ninth grade students take the Explorer test. All juniors are required to take the ACT test.

Lehto presented an overview of the Plan test. The plan is given in the tenth grade and it is considered a powerful predictor of success on the ACT. It focuses more on improving academic achievement and it gives the student added exploration of career or training options.

Escárcega shared that Rangeview requested that the Plan test be given to all sophomores voluntarily. Hinkley then requested that a limited number of students be tested and Aurora Central requested that all sophomores be given the test. The cost was \$2,000 per school.

Carmany asked who explains test results to students. Lehto replied that counselors meet with students individually to go over test results.

Tabacheck shared that this is a good way to determine who needs remediation and prepare them for college.

Lehto shared that all juniors are state mandated to take the ACT test. It assesses their general education development, proficiency, college readiness, and higher education entrance and placement. Escárcega shared that we are one of three states that require ACT testing.

The Accuplacer test is given to seniors that score below the cut-off scores for CCA in English, reading, and math. It is a 90 minute, computer-based assessment. It is administered by all the community colleges in the state of Colorado as well as some four-year colleges.

Our Human Resources department also uses the Accuplacer as a prescreening for NCLB for classified employees. We are also giving the Accuplacer as a placement to some higher level sophomores and juniors who are taking postsecondary courses at CCA.

Barry shared that this all connects to the VISTA 2010 plan to graduate every student with the choice to go to college without remediation. The Accuplacer test decides whether a student who has been accepted into college will have to take remedial courses before they can take credit courses for college.

III. CONSENT AGENDA - ACTION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

No Items

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Classified Personnel

Allen recognized the service of Debra Couch. Debra worked as a pre-school facilitator at Virginia Court. Sadly, she passed away just before the start of school. We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to her family and friends.

Allen recognized years of service for Susan McKay, who was the Board assistant for many years and has served in lots of positions in the district. Susan is retiring after 20 years and 2 months of service.

Licensed Personnel

Allen recognized years of service for Susan Kreutzer, who has been a teacher at Aurora Hills. Susan is retiring after 22 years of service in the district.

Non-Licensed Administrative and Professional/Technical Personnel

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

No Items

DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

No Items

DIVISION OF FINANCE

No Items

Tabacheck motioned and Carmany seconded to adopt the consent agenda as presented.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7910

The motion to adopt passed on a vote of 6-0.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

No Items

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

No Items

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Instructional Materials Adoption

Lord moved and Cook seconded to adopt the list of instructional materials as presented.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7911

The motion to adopt passed on a vote of 6-0.

DIVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

Naming of K-8, Number Three

Sturges invited Nancy Williams, principal of Quest, to the table to present information to the Board on the naming of K-8, number three. The Board was presented with information to rename K-8, number three to Quest K-8 at a Board meeting in June. It is recommended that the Board approve the recommendation to rename K-8, number three, Aurora Quest K-8.

Edberg commented that she had suggested another option at the June meeting when this item was presented as information. Cook shared that we looked at the policy for renaming a building after someone and there were some very specific rules. He asked Edberg if she wanted to make a motion to amend the motion and a vote would be taken.

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Edberg suggested naming K-8, number three, the Ed and Pat Lord Gifted and Talented School or include their names in Quest Academy. Edberg motioned but did not receive a second. Cook stated that the motion will die from lack of a second.

Cook moved and Tabacheck seconded to approve the renaming of K-8, number three, Aurora Quest K-8.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7912

The motion to approve passed on a vote of 4-2.

Barber, Carmany, Cook, and Tabacheck voted to approve the renaming of K-8, number three, Aurora Quest K-8.

Edberg and Lord voted against the renaming of K-8, number three, Aurora Quest K-8.

Sidewalk Easement at Dalton Elementary School

Lord moved and Tabacheck seconded to approve the sidewalk easement project at Dalton Elementary School as presented.

Roll Call: Barber, Carmany, Cook, Edberg, Lord, Tabacheck #7913

The motion to approve passed on a vote of 6-0.

DIVISION OF FINANCE

No Items

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Opportunity for Audience

Cook thanked Stuart and the instructional staff for outstanding BOE workshop on Saturday. The Board was pleased with information presented.

Next meeting date

The next business meeting of the Board of Education will be on September 4, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. in the boardroom of the Administration Building at 1085 Peoria Street.

Adjournment

The regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

President

ATTEST

Secretary